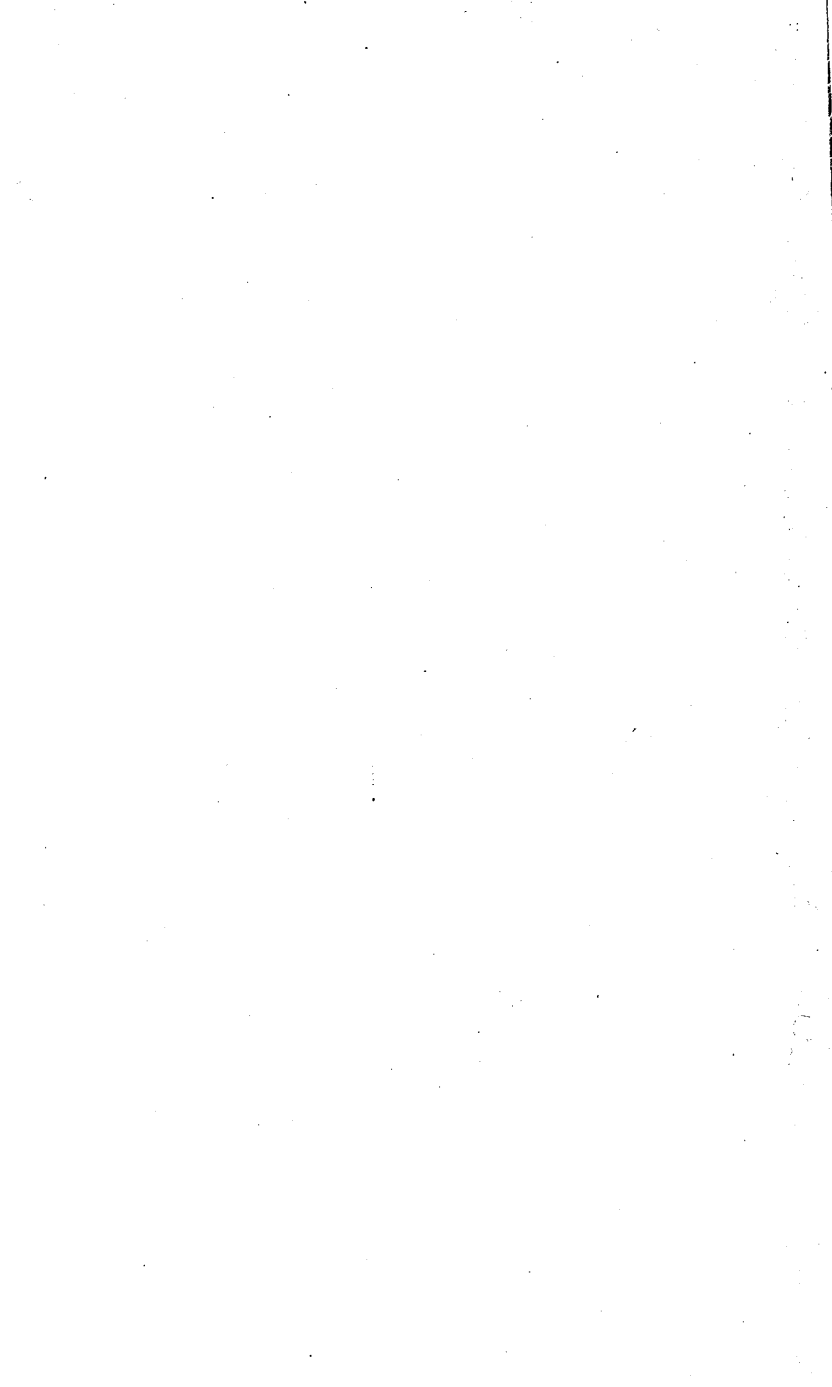


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In Lumine Tuo Videbimus Lumen

Psalm 36:9

IN LUMINE TUO

BY

RAYMOND C. KNOX

CHAPLAIN

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



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To
A. B. K.

FOREWORD

As indicated by the title, the addresses contained in this book were delivered at various times in the daily Service held in Saint Paul's Chapel, Columbia University. A number of them were also broadcast by radio with the Service.

In many instances the subjects of the addresses were suggested to the writer by students, from questions or comment in personal conversation, or from noting the general nature of their thinking and their interest. For however it may appear that they are indifferent to religion today, actual contact with youth, on occasion and in places which prompt them to discuss frankly, will make evident that they are often genuinely concerned, and that they desire simply the right to seek an intelligent understanding of it. Perhaps they follow unconsciously the advice of Saint Paul to "prove all things," but this insistence upon knowing for themselves is a healthy symptom, and the outcome of candor ought to be a greater certainty.

It is quite apparent that the present interest in religion, wherever it is found, has to do with those fundamental issues of life and its meaning which center in the character and teaching of Jesus. He appealed to men so deeply, His words were so vital and applicable to all human need,

FOREWORD

that however circumstances may change and knowledge increase, He ever remains the supreme interpreter of life, and an unfailing source of spiritual power.

While other themes are included, the chief aim of these addresses has been, therefore, to make as clear as possible within the limits of a brief Chapel Service, the significance of the life and the principles of Jesus. No complete presentation has been attempted, but a selection has been made from some of His striking sayings and illuminating parables. Especial attention has been given to His conception of the Kingdom of God, to be realized on earth, as the highest, unifying goal of life. To students and to others, irrespective of occupation or of age, who are seekers of life and the liberating power of truth, this book is offered in the hope that the Master of Life will become more real to them.

The title of the book, expressive of this purpose, is from the thirty-sixth Psalm, which was chosen in 1755 for the seal of King's College, later Columbia College, and which is inscribed over the entrance to Saint Paul's Chapel: *In Lumine Tuo Videbimus Lumen*—In Thy light shall we see light.

R. C. K.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Easter, 1931

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THE ATTAINMENT OF LIFE

THE ATTAINMENT OF LIFE

Men everywhere seek life. It is the strongest, deepest, and most persistent of all human desires. We all want life to be full and free and satisfying. This is manifested in everything that we do. If we are sick we wish to be cured, so that life may not be hampered by weakness and pain. In health the desire is intensified, for vigorous life is always indicated by the striving for more life. We continually endeavor to secure the means which will enable us to experience life in richer form and in wider range. If there are conditions which repress life, we try to overcome them. Education is sought to develop our latent capacities, to liberate us from the handicap of ignorance, and to open to us fresh resources of knowledge and training, that life may be enlarged.

With this imperious, ever present urge for life, Christ fully sympathized. He recognized it as having a divine source, and He saw the untrammelled attainment of life as man's foremost need. To assist men in finding life, was His deliberate aim: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."¹ His severest condemnation was upon those who placed any

¹ John 10:10.

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obstacle in the way of life, and He vigorously opposed every custom which deprived any person of the opportunity for gaining it.² He healed men of disease, and gave them new hope in living. His teaching was so vital and applicable that His words, it was said, "are life."³ Everywhere He made the impression of one who possessed the secret of life and who was eager to impart it.

That the universal quest of men for life might not end in disappointment and defeat, Jesus emphasized three fundamental truths that lead to its attainment. The first was that the desire for life must be intelligently directed. Otherwise the goal will be missed. This was His meaning in the saying: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."⁴ Not that life is in itself narrow, nor is it ever narrowly to be lived. Those who have truly found life do not have to be engaged in walking a chalk line. That was not His teaching. As He conceived it, life, when gained, is both broad and deep, and of infinite variety. But to gain life is not easy; it is a difficult achievement. As science has fully confirmed, to win life is a struggle.

On all sides there is evidence which also confirms His observation, that "few there be that find it." There are not many who genuinely know what it means to live, and these probably only at intervals. And one conspicuous

² Matthew 18: 4-6; compare 12: 10-12.

³ John 6:63.

⁴ Matthew 7:14.

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reason why so many who have a strong craving for life nevertheless miss it, is that their search is not wisely guided. Because the impulse for life is so insistent, an instinct with which we are born and which is as old as the race, there is always the danger that it will be followed blindly. In the eagerness to know life nothing is easier or more common than to act upon impulse, without knowledge and the light of intelligent judgment, with the inevitable result that life is not known. If we have not the keenness of eyesight and the trained sense to detect the trail, then like "babes in the woods" we soon lose our way in the thicket.

The second truth is in Jesus' saying: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."⁵ Or, expressed positively: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."⁶ Jesus did not make poverty a virtue, nor was His rule of living, renunciation. He frequently spoke of earthly goods as coming from God, and, as has often been pointed out, much of His teaching was concerning the way they are to be used for man's greatest benefit. He understood perfectly why men are so eager to acquire them. They minister to bodily want and remove the fear of it. They provide comfort and pleasure which form a favorable environment in which to live. They have their legitimate place as a stimulus to effort. Progress in civiliza-

⁵ Luke 12:15.

⁶ Matthew 4:4.

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tion and in culture also are largely dependent upon the supply of material goods, and the extent to which they are obtainable by all.

But Jesus saw clearly that while these things may contribute to life by furnishing the conditions that are favorable to it, yet life itself is not to be identified with the possession of them. For life in its nature is essentially spiritual. The degree to which it is known, is not indicated by the property a man owns or the size of his bank account. It is measured by his capacity to perceive and to appreciate spiritual values. To seek these first, even if need be at the sacrifice of material things, is the only way to find life.

The danger that lurks here is, that men will not make spiritual interest supreme. They may be deceived into thinking that life does consist in abundance of things, and all of their energies are bent upon getting them. They lose life "in over-anxiety about the means of living." They think more of what they have or are striving to get, than of what they are. A man's barns or his safe deposit boxes may be filled to overflowing, his control of finances and industries may make his name known the world over, but if his spiritual nature is starved, if he has no insight into the spiritual nature of the unseen, if he has surrendered principles for the sake of profits, his abundance will not compensate him for the life he has lost. It is lost, not as a visitation of punishment from without, but because a fundamental law of life has been violated. To enter the realm

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of the spirit and to dwell there, is to realize that "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The crowning truth in Jesus' teaching is, that life is gained as it is given. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it."⁷ In the service of any worthy cause, sacrifice of some sort—at times the utmost—is necessary. But accurately speaking, one does not thereby "sacrifice himself." On the contrary, precisely as Christ stated, he finds self. This biological law, as Christ formulated it, is simply the profoundest principle of complete self-realization.

"Man grows with his loftier purposes." In order to live, he must have not merely something to live *on*: he must have something to live *for*. And the higher the purpose for which he lives, and the more wholeheartedly he devotes himself to it, the more surely will he have life. So those who have tried this way to life have always discovered. General Armstrong, the founder of Hampton Institute, was a man of whom it was said, "had Williams College no other graduate, it would have amply repaid the cost." He undertook and supported his work at the price of constant personal privation. Yet in the "Memoranda" found by his friends after his death, he had made the comment, "I never sacrificed anything in my life."

The writer recalls an address by Doctor Grenfell at a

⁷ Matthew 16:25.

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student conference. He had been asked to speak on the subject of "Sacrifice." As he began his address he was obviously ill at ease, floundering about considerably. Finally he said, "I do not know how to talk on the topic assigned me. Let me tell you what a good time I am having!"

When our deep implanted desire for life is intelligently directed, when spiritual interests are sought first, when life is devoted to the purpose which we learn in Christ, there will be no uncertainty that it is life abundant.

“LET NOT THY LEFT HAND KNOW WHAT THY RIGHT HAND DOETH”

When Jesus made this comment, He was speaking of almsgiving. Acts of mercy, consideration for the poor and the sick, were everywhere regarded as praiseworthy; but as Jesus observed men making their gifts, He noticed the eagerness of many to make sure that their generosity should not go unrecognized. They believed that virtue, like one's business, should be advertised. It should be exhibited in the front window for men to admire and to desire. Accordingly, when they made their donations they employed the services of a trumpeter who paraded before them to make known the news. As with their piety and their prayers, they wished their benefactions proclaimed in the synagogue and also brought to the notice of those who passed in the street.¹

It was against this ostentatious display that Jesus spoke with fitting rebuke. He saw immediately its hollowness and its sham. There was not the sole and genuine desire to relieve others' needs; the wish for laudation and prominence was always present. Men who so acted were never free from the consciousness of their own merit. Their alms

¹ Matthew 6:1-6.

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were done to be seen of men, and their reward was in the plaudits to which they attentively listened.

In contrast, Jesus declared that the motive in giving must be absolutely sincere. There must be no blended ambition for personal advertisement and advancement. Whatever was done should be without calculating design and without trace of self-consciousness; "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."² The "open reward" (a more accurate translation is simply "recompense") which He said would then be given by the Father who seeth in secret, was to be wholly in the benefit of the deed itself, and in the character of the doer.

This direction of Jesus as to the doing of alms contains the principle which is the essence of His teaching in regard to all conduct. Real virtue, He taught, is never self-conscious.³ It is always spontaneous and natural. It is achieved, not by deliberate aim and meticulous striving, but by healthy growth. In its highest form, he who possesses it is not aware of it himself. Nor is he concerned with making others aware of it. In Jesus' description of the final judgment, those who were recognized as having done His work did not recall either the time or the circumstance. They had simply given aid as they met those who needed it, with no thought of doing anything unusual or com-

² Matthew 6:3.

³ Compare *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, by Ernest F. Scott, p. 117.

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mendable.⁴ Their reward was in taking their place with Him in whose service they had rendered it.

There is a type of goodness which often defeats its own end because those who exhibit it never rise above the level of conscious effort. With excellent intention, one may deliberately set out "to do good" by design. Sometimes it is recommended that a list of virtues be prepared and carefully checked, so that one is able each day to know the good deeds he has done. But such exercise belongs only in the "awkward stage" at the beginning, and ought to be superseded as quickly as possible by spontaneous acts which the doer entirely forgets. In many cases the sense of obligation to be an example, seen of men, is made a painful anxiety. There is an excessive fear of not being a model of rectitude for others to copy. It is not strange that goodness of this sort frequently fails. It is not attractive, because it is not wholly natural and unconscious. The left hand always knows what the right hand does. It is the kind which probably has given rise to the saying, "virtue is sometimes hard to bear"; for most people do not like to be the object of the design of others to do them good. As a discriminating student once remarked, "he did not wish to have people try to do good to him, but he was willing to do good with others." Such goodness may easily become priggish, and make a person like the Pharisee who, when he went up to the temple to pray, recited all he had done

⁴ Matthew 25:31-40.

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to merit the favor of the Lord, but who was not justified for that reason.

The most good is always accomplished by those who have the saving grace of self-forgetfulness. In them "the quality of mercy is not strained." Acting naturally, with no ulterior desire for effect, their lives are doubly appealing. Some one is said to have made the comment of Phillips Brooks: "Every time I see that man I find it easier to believe in God," the finest tribute, paid to a person who never for a moment thought of his piety. When Henry M. Stanley was commissioned by a New York newspaper to "go find Livingstone," he at last overtook him in the interior of Africa serenely carrying on his work. Stanley wrote of him in his journal: "He preached no sermon, by word of mouth, while I was in company with him; but each day of my companionship with him witnessed a sermon acted. . . . Had there been anything of the Pharisee or the hypocrite in him, or had I but traced a grain of meanness or guile in him, I had surely turned away skeptic."⁵ What Livingstone was, spoke so loud he did not need to say anything. A visitor in the Adirondacks said to Dr. Edward L. Trudeau, "your whole life has been a sermon." To which the Doctor replied apprehensively, "but I never intended to preach." "The well know not of their health, but only the sick." Health of mind and of spirit are indicated in like manner. They whose good-

⁵ *The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley*, p. 281.

LET NOT THY LEFT HAND KNOW

ness is of the highest type are simply healthy, in which is the secret of their effective lives.

In one of Dr. Crother's essays, in which he discusses movements of social reform, he speaks of a conception of duty which has become prevalent as "the obligation of every American citizen to see to it that every other American citizen does his duty and be quick about it." That is not the ideal of Jesus. He set before men the loftiest standard of service, and the task of establishing on earth the Kingdom of God. But he did not wish them to become reformers by profession, nor to have the traits of meddlers. His followers were to be the "salt of the earth," but it should be remembered that salt does its work best when it is not tasted.

The golden rule, "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"⁶ has been criticized as seeming to imply an element of calculation. A good act may be done because one wishes the benefit of similar treatment in return. Be this as it may, this saying of Jesus was His summary of "the law and the prophets." His own teaching goes further. The rule He gave was to show consideration and favor to those who were unable to make any recompense, even to those "who despitefully use you." Men are to do good, "hoping for nothing."⁷

When the motive is sincere, the friendly deed that is done is with no expectation of like benefit, and is totally

⁶ Matthew 7:12.

⁷ Luke 6:35.

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without self-consciousness. It is the expression of a life so healthy and natural, that "the left hand does not know what the right hand does."

THE REWARD OF OPPORTUNITY

Religion has often been thought of and presented in terms of reward. The man who keeps himself from evil ways and associates shall, it is said, be like a tree planted by a stream, "his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."¹ Do good, and you shall be amply repaid for it, if not in this life then in the hereafter. Heaven is popularly conceived to be the place where the righteous are abundantly and eternally rewarded; they go to their reward; while the wicked are elsewhere duly and perpetually punished.

Because of this view of religion, the motive for leading a virtuous life is, naturally, the desire to gain the benefits which such conduct brings. Appealing to a deeply rooted human instinct, the incentive to right living is felt to be permanent and strong, needing only to be guided by proper discrimination and foresight. So Paley in his *Moral and Political Philosophy* defines virtue as "the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of ever-lasting happiness." In *Pilgrims' Progress*, when the appeal is made to "Obstinate" to give up his manner of life by joining those who are on the road to

¹ Psalm i.

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the celestial city, he asks: "What! and leave our friends and comforts behind us!" "Yes," said Christian, "because all that you forsake is not worthy to be compared with a little of that I am seeking to enjoy . . . it is laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed, at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it." This same idea is also expressed in many of our familiar prayers and hymns, and is quite generally considered to be one of the fundamental teachings of religion.

Jesus spoke frequently of reward. He said that whosoever did the slightest act of human sympathy, the giving of a cup of cold water, "shall in no wise lose his reward."² He bade men guard against doing their alms in public, "otherwise ye have no reward of your Father in heaven."³ He assured those who were persecuted that they had reason to rejoice, for great was the reward which they would receive.⁴ Yet if we examine closely His sayings and consider how He used this term, we shall find that He gave to it an entirely new content. He never taught that religion was a scheme of calculating reward, or that men should be induced to live for His aims by the offer of superior compensation, either in this world or in any other.⁵ As in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard,⁶ He made it perfectly plain that man's relation to God was not a com-

² Matthew 10:42.

³ Matthew 6:1.

⁴ Matthew 5:12.

⁵ Compare *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, by E. F. Scott, p. 63 ff.

⁶ Matthew 20:1-16.

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mercial transaction, and that He could not be served on that basis. The assumption that man did the will of God for the sake of reward, was widely current in His day. It was found in the teaching of the Pharisees, who computed with painful minuteness what each act was worth.⁷ But Jesus rejected it completely as both unworthy and inadequate.

The new meaning which He gave to reward is to be understood, not in the form of benefits and blessings bestowed in abundance, so much compensation for each good deed done, but in terms of men's character, and for the sake of the end which they are to serve. He explicitly stated men were to "do good, hoping for nothing."⁸ When they saw others in need, they were to render the utmost of which they were capable, even to enemies, with no thought whatever as to whether they would be recognized or repaid. When such was their practice, they then shared in God's spirit, for His nature was giving to all, "making His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and the unjust." Their reward was in their character becoming God-like, and they became perfect according to the same standard by which He was perfect.⁹

He set before men the Kingdom to come upon earth, as the highest end which men were to seek. But He did not promise them in recompense that "whatever they did

⁷ Mark 7:10-13; Matthew 23:23.

⁸ Luke 6:35. ⁹ Matthew 5:43-48.

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would prosper." That was an outworn and discarded notion.¹⁰ He warned them, rather, of privation, hardship, persecution, the daily need of sacrifice, and He said that if any one turned back because of fear of these difficulties, he was not qualified to be His disciple.¹¹ But the reward for such devotion would be ever present, not postponed to the future. It would be in the satisfaction of giving one's self to a worth-while cause, of being able to make some contribution to it, and of seeing it steadily grow till at last it was fully established. This was the reward found in character and in service, of which He spoke. And He said it was great and would in no wise be lost.

Reward of this nature is the only kind worth striving for. It is an incentive far stronger than the offering of "prizes." There are some who fear that if religion is not presented in the old setting of everlasting rewards and punishments, there will be no inducement for men to live virtuously and to do good. No inducement! None in character, totally non-calculating, like Christ's? When He is lifted up on the cross of sacrifice, does He not draw all men unto Him? The best deeds of men, and their highest heroisms, have never been performed because a reward was offered, but from the imperious motive, deep lying in every man, of giving his utmost. Of course Christ taught belief in a life hereafter. He never thought of it as

¹⁰ Its incorrectness and inadequacy are clearly brought out in the Book of Job.

¹¹ Luke 9:62.

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distinct or separated from this life here. But He also pointed out that life, here or anywhere, is to be won only by conformity to the law of paradox: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."¹²

In the nature of reward as we learn its meaning from Christ, there is the secret of life, because it constantly releases a greater capacity for living. The highest return for work well done is in the increased ability to keep on doing it, and to do it ever better. Those who render faithful service in "few things" find a waiting opportunity to have "authority over many," because they have become qualified to undertake a larger task. They have grown in capacity.

When one seeks an education, what is his aim? To possess a degree? To have the standing in the community which education gives? To be successful in business and amass wealth? These are advantages not to be overlooked. Yet they may all be gained, and the real reward of an education lost. For it consists in trained ability; in a mastery of truth which opens the door to the discovery of more; in the power, which comes from doing a few things well, to undertake a work of greater responsibility. Education is not merely to enable one to earn a living, but increasingly to live.

The ideal of the Christlike life is to be sought for itself

¹² Matthew 16:25.

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alone, for its own intrinsic worth. In doing the will of God, there is to be no ulterior thought of the bounty we wish Him to bestow. But the reward is unfailing, because it is in the character and in the contributing service of life so lived, which ever leads on to life more abundant.

Go from the East to the West, as the sun and the stars direct thee:

Go with the girdle of man, go and encompass the earth;
Not for the gain of the gold, the getting, the hoarding, the
having,

But for the joy of the deed, but for the duty to do.

THE PASSING OF RESPONSIBILITY

In the story of the garden of Eden, it is said that when Adam was commanded to answer whether he had eaten the forbidden fruit, he offered the explanation that the woman, whom God had created to be his mate, had given it to him. When Eve was summoned to account for her act, her reply was that she had been beguiled by the serpent. The serpent was not questioned, but being traditionally subtle by nature, it probably would not have been hard pressed to invent an excuse.

The story was, of course, not intended to be taken as exact and literal biography or history. It is an old tale, repeated in various forms in the folklore of primitive peoples, which the biblical writers retold and adapted for the purpose of teaching a moral and religious truth. It was written for "edification rather than for information." And, as here used, it vividly portrays certain aspects of human character, and emphasizes in a manner easily to be remembered the fact that man cannot escape the consequences of his own acts.

The human trait, apparent at once in the replies made by both Adam and Eve, is that of attempting to pass responsibility for one's deeds to somebody else. The man

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not at all gallantly tried to shift the blame upon the woman who gave him the fruit, while the woman claimed it was the serpent that deceived her. From what can be observed of the prevalence of this trait in human nature, it is not strange that it was long ago seen to have a deep-seated origin, and that according to the story it was exhibited in the initial behavior of the first ancestors of our race. Whether we accept or reject the theological doctrine of original sin, the disposition to pass responsibility is original, both in the sense of being as old as mankind and newly practiced every day. If we do not subscribe to the belief that

In Adam's fall
We sinned all,

still there is ample evidence to show that the sin of evasion persists from one generation to another, and is quite commonly shared.

The "old Adam" is, for example, very likely to reappear when a man is called upon to explain a suspicious political transaction in which he is involved. The fact of participation cannot be denied, but he begins at once to make a plausible plea of extenuating circumstances and to show that the major responsibility was not his. Were not his actions simply in line with "what everybody is doing," and why should he be censured for conducting the public business in the usual manner of "practical politics"? It is found that his private bank account was suddenly and

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strangely increased. But this can be explained by the coincidence that he had a friend who made him a gift, though this favor had of course no influence upon his vote to dispose of valuable government property. The blame, if there were any, rests really with the people who subjected him to pressure, and there is no reason why he should be selected to bear the penalty.

In the world of commerce a man may be aware that there are occasional infringements upon strict honesty. But the fault is not with the individual who acquiesces in them. It is a part of the "system"; and in business there is no room for "sentiment."

A person's behavior may show an unfortunate lack of self-discipline and control. He may indulge in low desires, waste his talent, and have little or no consideration for the rights of others. But the explanation is ready at hand that he has only yielded to natural impulses, or that he is as conditions have made him, or that his defects are due to the way he was brought up.

A nation's policy may be self-centered and grasping. It may misuse its power and not always be scrupulous in keeping its pledges. But cannot this be stoutly defended by high-sounding theories of economic, geographic or military necessity? The course of action is wholly determined by conditions and forces that are beyond man's control.

Shakespeare understood this human trait when he

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wrote: "This is the excellent foppery of the world! . . . We make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, . . . and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on."¹ With which should be cited: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings."²

The modifying influence of environment is constantly present and not to be ignored. Hereditary forces, ancestral and racial, enter into the behavior of every individual. Modern psychology has skilfully detected many hidden factors which restrict and sometimes dominate conduct, and it has also successfully shown the way of release from them. But the fact remains, that if we are not masters of ourselves and responsible for what we do, then we are "underlings." Whatever the cause of our weakness, we are the ones who have the defects.

The development of character and of personality, the ability to direct life by reason and chosen purpose, instead of surrendering to blind impulses and pressure from without, demand the full recognition and acceptance of responsibility. Scientific discovery confers increasingly the power "to master nature by obeying her," to change and to create environment rather than to succumb to it. Social progress is largely measured by the extent to which this power is possessed and used. A community may dwell

¹ King Lear, Act I, Scene II.

² Julius Caesar, Act I, Scene II.

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in the vicinity of a disease-breeding marsh. Its inhabitants can plead that the marsh is there, and so they are not accountable for the high death rate. But an enlightened citizenship will recognize the task of removing the source of contagion, and proceed to do so. They are subtle forms of contagion to which individuals and society are exposed, but men of independence and of courage will find in them a duty and not make them an excuse.

With a more intelligent understanding of life, a better knowledge of the world and of the way its laws and resident forces are to be utilized, the old "curse of Adam" can be overcome. As men cease to pass up responsibility, the prospects are promising that the garden will become a paradise from which we shall not be cast out.

WHAT THINKEST THOU?

“What thinkest thou?” In various ways this was a question which Christ always asked of men. Whenever He engaged in conversation with them, He wanted to know what they thought, and particularly did He seek to encourage in them the power of clear and independent thinking. On one occasion a certain lawyer came to Him and asked: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”¹ Jesus replied by referring the question back to him: “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” The lawyer made the correct citation, that its requirement was to love God with all the heart and strength, and one’s neighbor as one’s self; but apparently he repeated it without sufficient thought, for he did not see its meaning. Instead of thinking for himself, he asked to be told who was his neighbor? But again Jesus put upon him the obligation to think. He related a story, the matchless parable of the Good Samaritan, which ends with the question: “Which one, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?”

To Jesus, a man’s whole life is determined by what he habitually thinks. He saw the truth expressed in the

¹ Luke 10:25-36.

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proverb, "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."² His own saying was, "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."³ A man's speech shows the character of his thoughts within. In Jesus' teaching the sins of infidelity, theft and murder were committed not at the time when the deed was done, but in the moment when the impure thought, the covetous desire, or the secret hate was given place in the mind.⁴

So, further, Jesus perceived that insufficient thought was the reason why His teachings were either unheeded or misunderstood, why the crowds at first flocked to Him and then turned away, why the leaders and officials soon regarded Him with suspicion and plotted His death. They were too busy and absorbed with other things to give time to reflect upon what He said, to free themselves from prejudice and superficial thinking. When making His final journey to Jerusalem, as He saw its crowded streets and bustling market places, His utterance was: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."⁵ And this same explanation became His prayer when He was crucified: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."⁶

² Proverbs 23:7.

³ Matthew 12:34. The heart was regarded as the seat of the understanding, as well as of the emotions.

⁴ Matthew 15:18-20.

⁵ Luke 19:41-42.

⁶ Luke 23:34.

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The chief obstacle that still hinders the spiritual life of men is not wickedness, but thoughtlessness. The majority are not downright bad; but many are indifferent, and indifference is mainly due to a failure to think. Phrases may be repeated, as the lawyer cited the commandment, but if the meaning is not seen, "words without thoughts ne'er to heaven go." Christ wished to know what men thought concerning great themes—our relation to God, our duty to our fellow men everywhere, the true significance of eternal life, and the things that belong to peace. These are not to be given only vague and occasional consideration, possibly on Sunday if one attends church and the sermon is interesting. They are to be laid hold of by diligent thinking, and be made consciously regulative in all activity. The difficulty is to get men really to think of the things of which Christ spoke. Now and then these things do arise in the minds of every one, but the disposition is to let them pass, to put off serious attention to them until some later time. Like Dame Quickly in the play when she tells of Falstaff's sickness: "So 'a cried out—God, God, God! three or four times: now I, to comfort him, bid 'a should not think of God: I hop'd there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet."⁷

One common hindrance to thinking such as Christ demands is in the circumstance that there seems to be

⁷ King Henry V, Act II, Scene III.

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very little time. This is something of which we all complain. Men, no doubt, have always been busy, but there probably never was an age when men rushed about in such frantic haste as they do today. The late Dean Hodges once pointed out that Raphael painted the hours as beautiful women, clad in flowing robes, looking out of dreamy eyes, but that the hours would be represented now by the rapidly revolving film of a moving-picture machine, showing Broadway at noontime. Mr. H. G. Wells is hardly to be taken as the ultimate authority on all aspects of the universe, but his impression of America seems remarkably lifelike. "The great thing," he says, "is the mechanical thing, the unintentional thing, which is speeding up all these people, driving them in headlong hurry this way and that, exhorting them by the voice of every car-conductor to 'step-lively'; aggregating them into shoving, elbowing masses, making them stand clinging to straps, jerking them up elevator shafts, and pouring them on to ferry-boats."⁸

We cannot set the clock back and return to a period of former, perhaps fancied, simplicity. We feel the exhilaration that is in the air, and no one of us wishes to be left behind in the procession. There is only one way to become master of ourselves, and not permit conditions to enslave us. We must train ourselves to think, to learn how to discriminate between higher and lesser values, to distinguish

⁸ *The Future of America*, H. G. Wells, p. 37.

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wherein life truly consists, and to have before us some clearly seen goal, to keep us from "flitting in all directions and flying in none." Even from the practical standpoint, "to be effective in action we must be calm within." Time must, and can, be found, to give heed to Christ's question: "What thinkest thou?" And according to our thoughts, so shall our life be.

Another hindrance to candid and clarifying thought, is a mistaken emphasis in our religious life. We are all possessed with a passion to do. The modern catchword is efficiency, and we are prone to measure religion by the same standard. Ministers and church members easily become engrossed in organizing societies and the multiplication of activities. Theology is discounted as a subject of study, for which, it is often urged, something more practical should be substituted.

It hardly needs to be said that we should be doers of the word, and not hearers only. There have been tremendous gains as men have realized that they are not called upon to forsake the world and contemplate the saving of their own souls, but to enter into the world and to transform it. Christ's own test was: "By their fruits ye shall know them." But when we read of His arising early in the morning to withdraw to the mountain side, of His bidding His disciples, "come ye apart a little, for there are many coming and going," shall we say that He withdrew because He wearied of aiding men?

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Or was it not rather because He realized that only as He made opportunity for reflection and renewal of spirit, so could He have the power to give them, not only bread for their bodies, but also bread whereof if a man taste he shall never hunger, and living water whereof if a man drink he shall never thirst?

Too often it may happen that in our eagerness to do, the ability for doing the utmost is lost. In our religious endeavors we rightly wish for results, but success in spiritual achievement is not to be measured by the industrial standard of mass production. We must be willing to labor on, even though we are unable to point to anything tangible, yet counting our gains in things unseen. For the great contribution of religion is in the lofty conception of God and of life which it presents, and in the task which it inspires men to undertake.

One man with a dream or pleasure
Shall go forth and conquer a crown,
And three, with a new song's measure,
Shall trample a kingdom down.

To have in us the mind that was in Christ is not gained through the idle repetition of words. It requires thinking of the highest order. To the extent of our capacity, we must give heed to His question: "What thinkest thou?" "When the procession of your powers goes up to the temple to pray," Phillips Brooks is reported once to have said, "leave not the noblest of them behind; give your mind to God."

THE WISE MEN

Of the many stories pertaining to the birth of Christ, one of the most picturesque and appealing is that of the Wise Men who came from the East, seeking the place where the young child lay. Throughout the Orient there were men generally known as the Magi, or Wise. In modern terms we might call them, The Royal Society for the Advancement of Knowledge and Research. Their foremost representatives were the scholars, philosophers, and scientists of their day; men who were ready then, as such men are now, to travel to all parts of the earth where knowledge is to be gained. They studied the physical universe, that they might better understand its nature and its laws. They diligently observed the appearance and motions of the heavenly bodies, from which were reckoned the recurring seasons, and they were the first to prepare a calendar. They also studied history, that they might know the meaning of events and the destiny of mankind; and some there were who looked forward to the coming of One who, by revealing to men the divine will, would bring a new era upon earth.

Various conjectures have been made as to the star which guided the steps of the three men in their journey

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to Bethlehem. When the great astronomer, Kepler, discovered in 1604 A.D. an unusually brilliant star, he computed that it was visible in the year Christ was born, and so he thought it might have been the one which the Wise Men beheld.

But far more important than any attempt to identify the star or to verify the details of the account, is the value of the story for its symbolic significance. In the Wise Men from the East, the Church has seen the representatives of the Gentiles, a symbol that Christ came to fulfill the hopes, not of one people only, but of all men everywhere. Further, the story has the significance that men who are seekers of truth, who are striving to understand the universe in which we live and its abiding laws, are drawn naturally to Christ. Of whatever race or creed, they feel a kinship of spirit with Him who was born to bear witness to the truth,¹ and whose teaching was: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."² Especially do they find in Christ the answer to the most persistent quest of the human mind: "What is life for?" In Him men see the purpose of life, which overcomes all feeling of its futility and defeat, which enables them to meet triumphantly its baffling experiences, and for which all their powers, their increasing knowledge and resources, are to be used.

With us this "ancient story lives again." Like the wise men of old, and in proportion as we are wise and not

¹ John 18:37.

² John 8:32.

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content to live thoughtlessly, so do we turn to Christ that we may learn from Him the meaning of life and the highest end which it is to serve. For unless we are able to discover the purpose of living, life is bound to be only a senseless, a disappointing thing. Without a clearly seen aim, life is like a ship or an airplane without rudder or compass or chart; it is equipped with power, but it cannot be steered in any direction, and there is no goal for which to steer. When men have no purpose to sustain them, they surrender to pessimism and despair. Life becomes no more than "a tale told by an idiot, a thing of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The world seems only a huge squirrel cage, in which men run around in frantic haste to get nowhere.

In the literature of pessimism, ancient and modern, this is always the blight that attaches to it; the writers have failed to discover any worth-while end for which to strive. They are all tinged with the gloomy temper of the author of the book of Ecclesiastes. He was evidently a man not of robust spirit. He had tried both wisdom and folly, had lived indulgently but found food and drink a meager enjoyment, had amassed wealth but realized its insufficiency, which was intensified by the reflection that it might be inherited by a fool. With no hope for the future, he was driven to live for the present, but the present was only a void. So in summary he can but repeat the dreary refrain, "vanity, vanity, all is vanity." His pallid

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philosophy is simply the consequence of a life deprived of purpose and without constructive conviction.

We frequently hear of the mechanistic view of the world and of life, the conception that this universe is an immense machine which grinds on and on but without intelligent and purposeful control; that men and women are but tiny cogs on a wheel whirled about by blind forces without real responsibility for action and the power to decide.

It is a strange notion. If those who see in the universe spiritual forces which lead them to believe that at its center there is a personal power, are criticized for their faith in an "anthropomorphic God," then those who maintain that the world is a machine are no less open to the charge that they have read into it their imaginings. They have merely ignored the personal character of the life of the spirit, interpreting it in terms of physics—an obvious fallacy—and in the place of a belief in God have substituted their belief in the metaphor of a man-made machine. Even as a comparison, it has a conspicuous fault, for we know of no machine that was not created by intelligence and for a definite purpose; and the more wonderful the machine the more surely is it the creation of a mind that has an end to accomplish. This mechanistic view is in reality but an old, discarded conception of blind fate, not the teaching of science, but only wearing its borrowed clothes. As William James once said, "the modern super-

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stition about the universe is to see nothing personal in it."

Over against these pessimistic interpretations there is the purpose revealed in the life of Christ. To strive for the goal which He makes known is not to stumble in darkness, but to have the light of life upon our path. Inspiring men constantly to search for greater knowledge, it gives direction to every activity, and makes the world a place where men and women who have moral responsibility can increasingly become free. To this highest conceivable aim are to be devoted all of one's talents, the utmost skill and trained ability, and the abounding power and wealth which advancing discovery and civilization afford.

Like the men of learning and the spirit of inquiry symbolically represented in the story of the three who came from the East, men of wisdom and of insight today are attracted to Christ. It is one of the notable facts of our time that men of clear intellectual discernment and of deep human interest do see in Christ the supreme purpose which life is to serve. They may not all have a definite religious faith in the ordinary, orthodox sense of the word. (What was the faith of the Magi who lived in a foreign land, amid other customs?) They may not regard themselves as religious at all. Still they honor Christ, and feel a kinship in spirit with Him. There is no doubt that He would recognize them as gatherers on His side,³ as His brethren.⁴ For they do His work, often at great sacrifice,

³ Matthew 12:30.

⁴ Matthew 12:47-50.

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in service to their fellowmen. Their lives are devoted to His purpose.

Christ is the light of the world, because He makes known to us what life is for; and in His light we see light. If, guided by a star, we make the journey to Bethlehem, the consecration of life to His purpose will be the natural and fitting homage.

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(*Continued*)

In the preceding address the story of the Wise Men was taken as a symbol, according to the accepted interpretation, for the truth that in the life of Christ men find the answer to the question: What is life for?

The story has a further significance. It may be regarded as a symbol of the need of Christ's religion for wise men. It stands for the fact that His service makes welcome place for, and also demands the devotion, the labor, and the wisdom of all men everywhere who are diligent seekers after truth. His purpose sustains and illuminates life, however circumscribed one's knowledge and surroundings may be. But if His purpose is to come to its highest fulfillment, it must be through the efforts of the men by whom our knowledge is enlarged, and who make available for us ever greater powers and means for living.

To heed this aspect of the story is of the utmost importance. For there probably never was a time when the Church and religious people generally were more called upon than they are today fully to recognize and to receive the benefit of the invaluable service rendered by

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men who are ardent searchers for truth. Far from being considered as opponents of religion whose discoveries are inimical to faith, they are the ones whose work is indispensable if we are effectively to carry out the aim which Christ sets before us. It is through them that we are no longer restricted to the thought of a small, flat earth under a near-by overarching sky, but are liberated by the conception of a boundless universe, governed by dependable laws, and filled in every atom with marvelous energy. They have shown us a vista of the origin of man, extending far into the past, and enabling us to trace the laws of his slow but steady development up to his present high estate. They have taught us how we may harness the inexhaustible forces of nature, so that they become ready servants to perform our toil and vastly to multiply our comforts. They have freed us from the fear of plague and of many diseases, and are ceaseless in their endeavor to overcome every form of sickness that limits the life of man. They have made highways of travel on land and sea and in the air, have accurately informed us of other peoples, putting us into instant communications with them, so that the world has become a neighborhood, waiting only for Christ's spirit to become a brotherhood. These are some of the achievements which the wise men of our age have wrought for our benefit. They make for us literally a new world wherein the advancing purpose of Christ can be proclaimed and made dominant.

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Nothing is more evident from its history than this, that without increasing knowledge, religion inevitably suffers and declines. Unless it is continually examined, and its course directed, in the light of clear understanding, religion stagnates, degenerates into superstition, breeds dogmatism, and instead of being an indispensable aid to man's growth, sets itself in opposition to progress. But when religion welcomes and utilizes knowledge, then it becomes more pure, more spiritual, bears fruit in ethical earnestness, and does its real work in the world.

To cite an illustration: through increasing knowledge, the Bible has been freed from the last bondage to literalism. Instead of a dictated book, it is now seen to be the record of an ever-truer comprehension of God through actual experience, imperfect at the beginning, but leading up stage by stage to the revelation in Christ. As a result of patient and thorough investigation, it is now possible to know the life of Christ and the nature of His teaching better than they have been known for centuries. And this means a new birth of religion. For "whenever Christianity has renewed the vitality of its golden age," the renewal has been due "to a return to Christ as His life is portrayed in the gospels, from which living waters have flowed as from an inexhaustible stream."

What might not be accomplished by us, in our generation, if dedicating ourselves to the purpose of Christ, we made it our task both to know and to utilize all the

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resources that men of scientific skill have opened to us! Says Doctor Robert A. Millikan: "Science imbued with the spirit of service, which is the essence of religion, and religion guided by the intelligence, the intellectual honesty and the effectiveness of science, can, between them, without a shadow of doubt, . . . transform this world in a generation."¹ It is an astounding assertion, yet it is made, not by a visionary or a fanatic, but by a leading man of science who is accustomed to measure his words. Already enough has been accomplished to show what is possible. The full transformation needs but the perfect harmonizing of the two forces, purpose and truth.

It is this ideal of the religion of Christ, recognizing and gladly accepting the contribution of those who seek knowledge, which is symbolized in the story of the three Wise Men who came to the manger to present to Christ their gifts. As a symbol, it has permanent significance, and suggests to us a course of action which is ever to be followed. We can devote life unfailingly to His purpose, and then employ for that end the utmost intelligence, intellectual honesty, and effectiveness of which we are capable.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

¹ *Science and Life*, by Robert A. Millikan, p. 78.

THE SIN OF IGNORANCE

A prominent author of our day has selected as the subject of one of his stimulating essays, "The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent." Taking as a text Kingsley's line,

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,

he proceeds to show how prevalent is the belief that intelligence is not only apart from character, but is considered to be a peril to it. "Here is the casual assumption that a choice must be made between goodness and intelligence; that stupidity is first-cousin to moral conduct, and cleverness the first step into mischief; that reason and God are not on good terms with each other."¹ This same distinction and distrust shown in the verse of Kingsley he finds to be either stated or implied throughout all English literature. "In Shakespeare's plays there are some highly intelligent men, but they are either villains or tragic victims." "In *Paradise Lost* Milton attributes intelligence of the highest order to the devil." Conversely, "in Fielding or Scott, Thackeray or Dickens, the hero

¹ *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent, and Other Essays*, by John Erskine, p. 5.

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of the English novel is a well-meaning blunderer, who in the last chapter is temporarily rescued by the grace of God from the mess he had made of his life."²

Against the assumption that intelligence and goodness exist in separate compartments, the one usually set in opposition to the other, the writer makes spirited protest, and maintains that "it is the moral obligation of an intelligent creature to find out as far as possible whether a given action leads to a good end; and that any system of ethics that excuses him from that obligation is vicious."³

With this contention there can be only the most hearty agreement. It should be obvious that well-formed character constantly needs the guidance of a critical and discriminating intelligence. But why is it that this plain truth has been so generally missed? Why was it not perceived by such men of insight and ability as Shakespeare and Milton, Fielding and Thackeray? The omission seems doubly strange when we remember the extent of the influence of the Bible in English literature, both in vocabulary and form, and also in the common conceptions of character. For in the Bible, Old Testament and New, the exalted place of wisdom and the necessity, for right living, of cultivating the understanding are among its foremost teachings. There is no more beautiful and glowing tribute to wisdom in any literature than in the book of Proverbs:⁴

² *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴ Proverbs 8, 1-4, 22-29.

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Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?
She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places
of the paths.

She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming
in at the doors.

Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. . .
The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before
his works of old.

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the
earth was.

When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there
were no fountains abounding with water.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I
brought forth:

While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor
the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a
compass upon the face of the depth:

When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened
the fountains of the deep:

When he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not
pass his commandment: when he appointed the founda-
tions of the earth:

Then was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was
daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights
were with the sons of men.

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed
are they that keep my ways.

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my
gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of
the Lord.

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Even though wisdom, here and in other similar passages,⁵ is possibly derived from Greek thought, yet its indispensable place and eternal nature are fully recognized. Reason and wisdom may not, in the strict sense, be wholly identical, but they are sufficiently so to make it clear that "reason and God are on good terms." And if, as is usually pointed out, wisdom in the Bible has a more practical application to conduct as compared with speculative philosophy, this makes it the more evident that the biblical writers saw that the moral life could not be lived without intelligent direction.

In the teaching of the Prophets there is the reiterated insistence upon the necessity of greater intelligence in order that the religious practices of their day might be acceptable to God. They were themselves men who had an amazing ability to "find out as far as possible whether a given action leads to a good end," both in the life of the individual and in the complicated behavior of society. The senseless idolatries with their revolting rites, the elaborate ceremonial observances with which they thought to please God in disregard of His actual ethical demands, the limited and erroneous conception of His will in the treatment of foes and foreigners, were all, according to the teachings of the prophets, simply the consequence of stupidity and failure to think. Advance was to come, they proclaimed, by a fearless examination of whatever was

⁵ For instance, Job: 28.

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done in the name of religion, by a more intelligent conception of God, and by a more exact testing of the end which their actions served.

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

. . . To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord. . . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?

. . . Learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

. . . Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord.

Isaiah 1:3; 11; 12; 17; 18.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

. . . For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Hosea 4:6; 6:6.

They saw in their time that the "villains" were "clever," while the pious were content merely to be "good," and they made the contrast a rebuke.

My people are foolish . . . and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Jeremiah 4:22.

In the New Testament there is the same emphasis upon the obligation to use one's mind. The first condition named by Jesus for entering the new order of the Kingdom was to repent, which is always and essentially a mental act. It means specifically "to change one's mind for the better," to rethink in a more intelligent manner, with

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the implication that conduct is to be changed accordingly.⁶ Nor can we understand the entire teaching and life of Jesus if we overlook His ceaseless efforts to arouse men's thoughts by incisive questions, comments, and illuminating parables, so that their action might be wisely guided in attaining the one end of the Kingdom.

Paul, mystic though he was, perceived that in prayer clarity of thought should be foremost, and declared he had rather "speak five words with understanding" than to experience the highest emotional ecstasy.⁷ He refers to certain people whose sincerity was undoubted but who, nevertheless, did the wrong thing because they neglected to think: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."⁸ And the author of the Second Letter of Peter gives the admonition: "In your faith supply virtue and in your virtue, knowledge."⁹

The Bible, surely, affords no support to "those who, unconscious of blasphemy or humor, prefer not to be intelligent, but to do the will of God."¹⁰ On the contrary, it teaches that "ignorance is not innocence but sin," and it makes the fullest exercise of the mind not only a moral, but also a religious, obligation.

⁶ Compare the chapter on "The Kingdom of God—the Need of a New Mind."

⁷ I Corinthians, 14:14-20.

⁸ Romans 10:2. A more accurate translation is "not guided by true insight."

⁹ II Peter 1:5.

¹⁰ *The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent*, pp. 23-24.

HUMILITY

There is no teaching of Jesus which men have found more difficult to accept and to follow than His repeated insistence that they should be humble. To have the spirit of humility was, He declared, to take the right attitude toward life. It was to be the habitual quality or temper of mind expected of all who became His followers, and one of the distinctive characteristics by which they were known. No one who did not have it could enter the Kingdom of God. The humble, He said, were to be exalted;¹ and among those whom He named as possessing the utmost happiness in life were the meek, or the humble, who were also given the assurance that they should inherit the earth.²

The lack of humility was a conspicuous defect which He saw in men, especially among the religious and the prominent, and He severely criticized many of their practices and standards for this reason. His demand that they change their attitude and become humble, is, in fact, one of the striking differences between His teaching and the aims and views which men commonly held. For the spirit of the age was not humble. In politics and government,

¹ Luke 14:11.

² Matthew 5:5.

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those who occupied exalted positions were not men whose lives were marked by humility; they were men who were ambitious to rule and who exercised lordship and authority by their assertive powers.³ As a requirement of religion, the precept "to walk humbly" had long been known,⁴ but it was little practised. There was the familiar spectacle of the scribes and the priests who loved "to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and the chief places at feasts."⁵

Even among those whom He selected to be trained for His work, the necessity for humility was but slowly comprehended, and we read of their disputing with each other on more than one occasion as to preferment and rank. When Jesus noticed this, He called a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."⁶

What did Jesus mean by humble? Unfortunately the word in our present usage has a meaning which is quite misleading. It has the suggestion of a disposition to belittle one's self, a servile attitude, a willingness to submit to unjust treatment, such as a self-respecting person would instinctively resent; to suffer, perhaps, from an inferiority complex. Dickens portrays the character of Uriah Heep

³ Mark 10:42.

⁴ Micah 6:8.

⁵ Mark 12:38-39.

⁶ Matthew 18:1-4.

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as a person who constantly protests that he is "'umble," and we despise him for his cringing hypocrisy.

But these are aspects which are totally absent from the spirit which Jesus specified and sought to instill. In His teaching, humility is never servility, nor is "meekness ever weakness." What He meant by humble may be seen from that with which He contrasted it. It is opposed to conceit, to arrogant pride and ruthless ambition; especially did He set it in opposition to a satisfied mind and a self-righteous spirit. Jesus taught humility because He saw that it was essential to continued mental growth, and the characteristic spirit of true greatness.

We can learn the place of humility from the way truth is discovered. If a man is satisfied with what he knows, be it much or little, whether his complacency is due to indifference or pride, his attitude is an impassable barrier which keeps him from learning anything more. "The moment you lose humility, you stop learning," is a remark which a discriminating novelist attributes to Benjamin Franklin. One of the finest illustrations of humility may be seen in the man who is wholly actuated by the spirit of scientific investigation. He never permits conceit or satisfaction with what he knows or has achieved to enter into his efforts to discover more of truth. He realizes how vast is the truth that is still to be learned, that even the wisest are "like children picking up pebbles on

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the shore of the infinite ocean,"⁷ and in its presence he is always humble. Huxley found in adapting the words of Jesus the best advice to give to his pupils: "Sit down before a fact as a little child; be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads."⁸

It is precisely this readiness to "follow humbly," without impatience or prejudice, which leads to a knowledge of the truth about God. Whoever seeks in the spirit of genuine humility will find, and to him that asks, it shall be opened.

Humility is further indispensable to the effective service of a worthwhile cause. Without it there is always the danger that an end, excellent in itself, will be injured and frustrated by the personal pride or pettiness of the men who would serve it. How often has it happened that a man, well qualified intellectually for leadership and sincere in his desire to promote some high aim, falls short in achievement because he is not humble. He may not be content to serve unless he receives the recognition which he regards as his due. If he wins acclaim, his head may be turned—or enlarged—and he becomes domineering and proud. Or, in more subtle form, he may lose his humility by so identifying his own plans and reputation with the cause itself, that he treats those who differ from

⁷ A figure of speech used by Sir Isaac Newton.

⁸ Cited by Kirtley F. Mather, *Science in Search of God*, p. 30.

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him in detail as its enemies, and refuses to join with them. But the result is that the work suffers because it is deprived of the wisdom and aid of all its supporters.

The greatness of Lincoln was in large part due to his humility. He was willing "to sit down before the facts" and learn. His devotion to the task of preserving the nation was so complete that he had neither time nor inclination to notice personal slights. When chided by a friend because he showed no resentment of an unfair attack, he replied: "you have more of that feeling than I have," adding characteristically, "but I never thought that it paid." He had malice toward none, because, as he said, "what I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing."

To be humble is thus to be fit to serve the cause of Christ. As an attitude toward life, it keeps open the way to knowing the truth that makes men free. It removes from discipleship all trace or discussion of rank above others, of desire to occupy chief seats and to receive the applause of the crowd. The humble will be exalted not necessarily or inevitably by external recognition, but simply in being what they are. There are good reasons for believing that in the end, they shall inherit the earth.

“HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YOU?”

When Jesus saw that the multitude, which had been with Him for several days on the mountainside, were without food, He had compassion on them and said He would not send them away hungry, lest they faint by the road. But His disciples asked: “Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?” Then Jesus inquired of them: “How many loaves have you?” And when they answered, “seven,” He took the loaves, gave thanks and brake them, directing that the disciples distribute to the people, “and they did all eat and were filled.”¹

From comparing the several accounts of this scene it has been inferred by some writers that the basis of the description was originally a parable which Jesus related.² But whether parable or miracle, the important thing is the principle that Jesus either taught or demonstrated. His object was to make men realize the necessity of using the means they have as God’s way of leading them to larger achievement. “That God lets nothing go to waste,” says Phillips Brooks in his suggestive treatment of this

¹ Matthew 15:29-39; compare 14:13-21 Mark 8:1-10, and John 6:1-13.

² Compare *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, Charles Foster Kent, pp. 221-222.

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theme, "is the highest perfection of His boundless resource." However meager and insufficient man's possessions may appear, they are nevertheless to be used to the utmost, and the final outcome will be in some surpassing accomplishment, beyond one's power to foresee. In the parable of the talents, the man who had one was afraid to use it because it seemed little; so he hid it in the earth and gained nothing. But those who had a greater number intrusted to them, and consequently more to risk, employed their talents, with the result that having been "faithful over few things" they were made "rulers over many." In this principle of use, Jesus perceived a law of life, God's method of dealing with men, which He summed up in the saying: "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have in abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."³

"How many loaves have you?" It is the question which Christ constantly asks of men. He asks it in the ordinary circumstances of life as well as when they are confronted by some unexpected task. There are some who feel that the positive faith which they have is very little. They are not indifferent, but they do not know what they can definitely affirm. They may hesitate, perhaps, to say that they believe in God, or in the divinity of Christ, or in the

³ Matthew 25:29. The meaning of this saying, it will be noted, is deeper than "those who have, get."

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life hereafter. They are perplexed by the widespread evil and suffering in the world, and do not see how they can honestly assert their trust in a good and all-wise Providence.

But whatever the doubt, or the reason for it, there is always a more fundamental consideration. This is the question: "How many loaves have you?" For what a person at any time does not believe, is never of the first importance. The primary and essential thing to ascertain is, what does he believe? Let the negations and the uncertainties be as numerous as they may, it is the positive that counts most. What is it of which one can say: "This much I have; in this I believe; I am willing to use it and to go on to more"? In his positive affirmation, he may have only a fragment of a loaf, but if it is offered in the service of Christ, it can be multiplied into many.

It is said of Horace Bushnell that when he was a student and passing through a period of questioning and doubt which is quite normal, the only truth he felt he could affirm was, that there is a difference between right and wrong. Even that distinction he could not precisely define; but he determined to learn. He had only a small loaf, but by using what he had he came to a deeper knowledge of Christ, and the faith he finally gained brought aid to a multitude.

When Doctor Grenfell was a young man, he happened to attend a meeting where Mr. Moody was presiding.

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A man in the audience was making a long prayer, without "terminal facilities." After some minutes Mr. Moody arose and said: "While the brother is finishing his prayer, let us sing a hymn," and announced the number. This common-sense procedure attracted Grenfell so that he came again, and as his interest increased, he decided to do something. He found that there was need for one of his training among the fisher folk of Labrador. Beginning with what he had, his work has steadily grown to the relief of thousands and has become known everywhere.

A man may start with his integrity in business, or his love of justice and fair play, his quest for truth, his longing for beauty, his natural sympathy for those in need. His dominant interest or quality may not seem to him to be religious, but if he is willing to devote it to the cause of Christ, it will by His spirit lead to a faith and a benefit that exceed all prediction.

The principle is no less true when men work together for some undertaking of especial difficulty. We have joined with other nations in pledging ourselves to abolish war. But still it is feared that the time of realization is far distant. The measures and organizations for the peaceful settlement of all disputes seem as feeble as they are untried. We are reluctant to commit ourselves wholly to them. But the means we now have, with human nature far from perfect, are sufficient if they are fully used, with

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faith in the greater outcome, which in God's providence will surely bring peace and good will upon earth.

We men of earth have here the stuff
Of Paradise—it is enough!
We need no other stones to build
The stairs into the unfulfilled,
No other ivory for the door,
No other marble for the floor,
No other cedar for the beam
And dome of man's immortal dream.
Here in the path of everyday,
Here in the common, human way,
Is all the stuff the gods would take
To build a heaven, to mould and make
New Edens. Ours the stuff sublime
To build eternity in time.

This is Christ's miracle. It can be seen whenever men offer him their loaves.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

The way Christ directed His followers to do His work in the world was very simple. They were not to imitate the great ones of the earth by seeking conquest in war, nor were they to think that His cause could ever be served by any exercise of physical force. They were not to strive for positions of authority and of political power, that they might dictate faith and regulate conduct by official decree. They were not to desire that they be protected and guided by miraculous aid, for it was Jesus' teaching that to seek a "sign" was not a mark of faith but of a dull mind. They were not to make converts by superior subtlety and skill in argument and debate, for His principles were plain, and if rightly presented could be comprehended by all. His work was to be made successful by just one method: the followers of Christ were to be men who would bear witness to Him by the way they lived. They were to be known wherever they went and in all that they did by the new spirit which they manifested. This spirit in them would then exert its own unfailing appeal, like the spirit of the Master Himself. It would spread as all life spreads, from person to person. They were so to live that their lives would be like the salt which

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had not lost its savor,¹ able to counteract the forces of disintegration and decay, and to keep life wholesome and sound. Thus by the contagious power of Christ-like living, society would slowly but surely be transformed, and in the end His spirit would permeate and direct all the affairs of life.

Today the number of those who in one way or another indicate their adherence to the religion of Christ reaches into the millions. In this country alone, according to the latest census, those who profess Him constitute practically one-half of the entire population. Whatever the organization or communion to which they belong, whatever the form of belief that is professed, there is one common obligation which no person who bears the name of Christ can possibly escape. It is the duty to endeavor so to live that his life gives evidence of the spirit of Christ. For to be known by His name without sharing His spirit brings no benefit either to religion or to the man himself. Rather, both are brought into disrepute. This Christ declared with uncompromising clearness: "If the salt," He said, "has lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

What modern Christianity most needs is not more argument to prove that it is theoretically true. Reflecting men are now quite generally agreed that Christ's teaching in

¹ Matthew 5:13; Luke 14:34-35.

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principle is true. The demand is to see more of it in practice. As Mr. Chesterton remarked at the outbreak of the great War, it was not that Christianity had been tried and found wanting; it had been found difficult, and had not been tried. Nor are further debates and contentions wanted to demonstrate the claims of one form of Christianity as superior to all others, for the world has suffered too long from such unedifying controversies. But the world has not seen enough of genuine Christian lives—lives that have in them savor. Here “one example is worth a thousand arguments.”

When Christ said of His followers, “ye are the salt of the earth,” He implied that they should have two indispensable qualities. And the first is courage. He always insisted that those who did His work must have courage. He would allow no one who did not possess it to be of His company. “Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”² “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.”³ In His day and in the age that came after it, to be a Christian was an extra-hazardous occupation, and unless a man had courage he was not considered fit to bear the name.

We are not now in physical danger because of our faith, at least, not in most countries. But courage is still the first and essential requisite. “Safety first,” it has been said,

² Mark 10:38. ³ Luke 9:23.

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"is an excellent motto for a bank or a railroad, but it is a poor motto for a Christian man or a Christian nation." How many are there who in their heart believe in the teachings of Christ, but who have not the hardihood to uphold them? Their fear may be no more than that some one may smile or call them religious. They may realize that to adhere to His principles involves certain demands upon their time and the giving up a few pleasures, but they are not willing to make the sacrifice. They may know of practices in business which do not conform to the ethics of Christ, but they are afraid of financial loss should they venture to oppose them.

It is always easy to play safe, to act and to think as do the majority. Let anyone express noticeably different views from those commonly held, and he will be exposed to suspicion and attack, possibly will be called disloyal to church or country, without the slightest inquiry being made as to whether or not his views are true; they are simply other than those that are customarily accepted. It is the fear of this experience which causes many a man to cringe, to stand pat, in high places as well as obscure.

Because men who have convictions and who dare express them are too seldom found, the question has been asked of our colleges and universities: Can they "impart enough mental and moral stamina to the youth who commit themselves to their care to turn these into militant

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centers of courage, both intellectual and moral; to make them men and women of conscious independence and frankness of thought and speech?"⁴

With courage, the further quality which Christ spoke of as "salt that has not lost its savor," is the unfailing spirit of charity. "Have salt in yourselves," are His words, "and be at peace one with another."⁵ And it is charity which is "the very bond of peace and of all virtues." Throughout the entire New Testament, charity is made the distinctive mark of those who really have the spirit of Christ. Whatever other qualities one may have, personal integrity, devotion, faith, the gift of tongues or of prophecy, all these, according to Saint Paul, are nothing without charity; which, be it remembered, is of the mind as well as of the heart. The writer of the Fourth Gospel and of the Epistles of John uses the word love as the equivalent of charity to repeat over and again that this alone counts. Jesus is reported to have stated specifically: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."⁶

When we consider the bitter and scurrilous attacks that have been made in the name of religion, reviving dead issues that should lie buried with the dead past, and threatening the foundation principles of our nation, can we not expect that there will be found among those who

⁴ "Courage," Commencement Address by Nicholas Murray Butler, June 3, 1925.

⁵ Mark 9:50.

⁶ John 13:35.

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would follow Christ enough salt that has not lost its savor of charity to counteract these destructive influences?

The late Chaplain Twitchell of Civil War fame tells an incident upon which we may well reflect. He and a Jesuit priest were working together one evening on the field of battle, caring for the wounded, burying the dead. Finally, late at night, they felt compelled to take a short rest, so they lay down under a tree. As the night was cold one of them suggested that they "club" their blankets to cover them both. Soon Chaplain Twitchell noticed that the priest was quietly laughing. It seemed a strange thing to do, and when asked why, he replied: "I am laughing at us; here you are a Yankee parson and I am a Jesuit Priest, rolled up together on the battlefield." Then looking up at the stars, he added, "But I think the angels are smiling too."

No one of us would thoughtlessly bear the name of Christ. We would see all men united by His spirit, and the world dominated by His ideals. But we cannot respect ourselves, nor can we advance His work, without the two requisites of discipleship: courage for the right as it is given to us to see it, and charity towards all.

BUT IF NOT

A Bible story which has always had a peculiar fascination and appeal is that of the three young men who were cast into a burning fiery furnace. It is found in the book of Daniel,¹ written in the second century before Christ, and at the time of an intense persecution. This writing is in the strict sense not history, though it refers to men who actually lived and to events which undoubtedly took place. In its literary form it is known as an apocalypse, one of the characteristics of which is the description of scenes and the forecast of events in highly symbolic language. The purpose of the book was to encourage its readers to be steadfast in their faith in the midst of suffering, and to assure them of the certainty of final deliverance. We can rightly understand the book, therefore, only as we penetrate beneath the figurative language and see what was the faith which they were urged to defend and which in the end was to be triumphant.

In the symbolic story of the three young men, it is said that the King of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar, had set up in the plain a huge, golden image. That it might be worshiped everywhere in the realm, a great assembly was

¹ Daniel 3.

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called, to which were invited the captains and the rulers of all the provinces. A full organized band played upon various instruments, and the decree was issued that at the sound of a signal all should fall down and worship, with the added warning that whoso refused would be punished by burning. And at that signal, all prostrated themselves before the image save the three men. Another opportunity to obey was given to them, but they would not take it. Whereupon they were seized and cast into the furnace, which we are told was heated "seven times more than was wont."

The most spectacular and easily remembered circumstance in the account that follows is that upon their bodies "the fire had no power, neither was a hair of their head singed—nor the smell of fire had passed upon them." But the real purpose of the story, which is to show the unflinching faith of the young men, is found elsewhere in the narrative. When they flatly refused to surrender their allegiance to God, they still had the hope that they would not be left to suffer the penalty. Yet it was not that expectation which caused them to resist, for they saw clearly that torture and death might be their fate. There was no guarantee of escape. Their faith was shown in their reply to the King: "We are not careful," they said, "to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, we know that our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand.

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But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Their faith, that is, was not a matter of expediency. It did not depend upon their being protected from harm. It was not simply the belief that God would save them. They knew that He had the power to do so, and they thought that He would. But even though He did not, they would be loyal to Him. Their faith was firmly founded upon principle, and they were fully prepared to take the consequences of adhering to it. To show this kind of faith is the real purpose of the story, which bids all men exhibit it in the same manner.

Many centuries have passed since the tale was written. How an oppressed people responded by heroic endurance, rallied their forces, defeated the armies of the King, and for a time were free, are recorded in the history of

Old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.

But though years have elapsed, and no king commands us to worship a golden image, yet the test of faith remains the same. It is found in the question whether or not we have the courage to say: "But if not." Is there anything in our lives in which we so resolutely believe that, when for its sake we have to face hardship and loss, we still are willing to be loyal to it? In religion it is always necessary to make sure that our faith in God is not of the timid,

calculating kind—in reality not deserving of the name of faith—which flourishes only when we are safe and prosperous, but which vanishes when there is something to endure. It is not difficult to believe in God and His protecting providence when things go well. That requires no discriminating intelligence, no spiritual insight. But to live in this world with its misfortunes, its ills, and its baffling experiences, such as sooner or later come to us all, and yet to hold steadfastly to principle, to retain and deepen our faith, is the only way whereby religion becomes vital and its true purpose known.

Does a man believe in telling the truth? If so, when and why? Under all circumstances, even though to do so involves him in some form of loss? Does he believe in it as a principle, or only because it is expedient, because it is advantageous to have the reputation for veracity? If one can pass an examination only by cribbing, will he refrain from fear of being detected, or because he believes in integrity though it may mean a “flunk?” The one guarantee of truth telling is inner faith in it, strong enough to resist every suggestion to violate it on the score of personal benefit. There was a good deal of discernment in the remark of Mr. Bryan: “If a man doesn’t believe in honesty, don’t argue with him, search him.”

It was precisely this appeal to be loyal to principle in the face of hardship and the necessity for sacrifice that Christ made to men. His religion was not a means of escape from

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danger nor the assurance of protection under all circumstances. It is the religion which calls upon a man "to live dangerously" for the sake of principle, and no one who makes earnest with His teachings will fail to find in his own life and in society frequent occasions which bring risk and the possibility of loss.

There are some of cynical spirit who assert that men are not able to give fidelity to principle at all times. Their saying is: "Every man has his price, you have only to find it." Environment is considered to be the controlling factor in conduct, and "in Rome men will do as the Romans do." Standard of action and ideas of right and wrong are not regarded as abiding principles; have they not varied from age to age and among different peoples? They are thus only the conventions of men, having simply the validity and force of what society has found for the time to be expedient. Success is the only test, and one is justified in doing whatever he can get away with. Character is likened to a bar of steel which is taken to the testing room. It may stand the first applications of pressure, but add more, and more, and the breaking point will be reached.

This is in part true. There probably are limits to what the unaided spirit of man can endure. Many a man, who has assumed that his character was sufficiently strong, has discovered under some sudden or unusual strain that it had a flaw. But the analogy is not complete. When pressure comes from without, a man's character can be

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reënforced. We know it can be strengthened by contact with others who have withstood a like experience. We know also that it can be fortified to meet the strain if one has learned the source of spiritual renewal within. It can be made capable of resisting and overcoming every assault if one's faith is of the sort which sustained the three young men as they stood before the King and dared give him answer, "If so be, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

THE BRAMBLE BOSS

In the days of the Judges, an age which has been called "the colonial period" of Hebrew history,¹ the people lived in small, scattered settlements, and as the monarchy had not been established, each community regulated its own affairs. The Judges were not magistrates of a court; they were usually men of skill and success in border warfare, who also were looked to as leaders in time of peace. They controlled local politics, administered clan laws, and directed social life generally. Thus each locality was an early experiment in self-government. How far were the people advanced in the recognition of responsibility for public affairs? Did they have an intelligent interest in all that pertained to the common welfare, and were they willing to make personal sacrifices for it? Were they vigilant to select as their leaders men of wisdom and integrity? Or would they submit to the rule of any one, however unscrupulous, who might come into power?

In one section of the land the situation had become critical. By appealing to ignorance and prejudice, a cunning manipulator had managed to grasp possession of office. With authority gained he promptly got rid of his rivals

¹ Approximately 1150-1050 B. C.

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by having them assassinated. Those who protested his acts were in constant danger, and some had sought safety in flight. Then it was that a man named Jotham, who saw the real cause of the trouble, told this parable or fable of the trees:² The trees went forth to choose a king, and they said to the olive tree, "reign thou over us." But the olive tree, flourishing in the rich soil where it grew, did not wish to be disturbed, and declined, saying: "Should I leave my fatness, and go to wave to and fro over the trees?" So they went to the fig tree and said: "Come thou and rule over us." But the fig tree was prospering where it was and answered, "Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and wave over trees?" They next went to the vine and requested its services, but the vine pleaded that it could not be expected to leave its cheering new wine and undertake a less congenial occupation. Having failed to get the aid of the better trees, they turned, as a last recourse, to the bramble. The bramble accepted on the spot, and proceeded to tell them what his reign would mean. They had asked him to be king, and he intended to be their ruler. All matters must be left in his charge. They must take refuge in his shade and submit to his dictates. If they did not do so, measures against those who refused would be severe. "A fire would go forth from its thorns," which would spare none of them, not even "the cedar of Lebanon."

² Judges 9:7-15.

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We may call the story the parable of the Bramble Boss. Its application was plain. If citizens who had ability and enjoyed advantages were so absorbed in their own pleasures and pursuits that they were not willing to perform their public duty, then there could be but one consequence: power would pass into the hands of a political boss or absolute dictator who would brutally enforce his will upon everybody. This was the explanation of the disaster that had befallen the community, and the reason why their liberties had been lost.

We live in a nation which, in the words of a famous address, was "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal."³ In the crisis of the Civil War, Lincoln saw the test to be "whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and dedicated, can long endure." The test is still being made in time of peace, and with increasing severity. Everywhere the question is now asked, has democracy, or any form of government representing all of the people, the power to overcome its defects, and to demonstrate that it can meet the increasing demands that are made upon it?

³ In this statement, obvious differences in men were not overlooked. "They [the authors of the Declaration of Independence] did intend [to include] '*all men*,' but not to declare all men equal *in all respects*—color, size, intellect, '*moral developments or social capacity*'—but equal as to '*certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*.'" *Abraham Lincoln*, by Albert J. Beveridge, Vol. II, pp. 513-14.

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The weaknesses in democracy at present are many and quite apparent. One is the danger, as known in the days of the Judges, that an unscrupulous boss and his gang will gain control, especially in large centers of population. Whenever this happens, a fire shoots forth from their thorns, and the flames scorch everyone. It is also frequently pointed out that with the leveling instincts of the crowd, the people will not select for office men of superior ability. They choose mediocre men who are inclined to care more for votes than for principles. In former days, when the population of this country was small, it may have been possible to have an informed public opinion; but today, with our many millions, a strong case can be made for the charge that public opinion, so vital to self-rule, is only a phantom. Present-day issues have become largely economic, international relationships have become highly complex, and these, it is said, require more knowledge and skill than the average citizen possesses; they can be properly guided only by experts.

Moreover, the citizen who may wish to have some part in public affairs often feels that what he can accomplish is almost negligible. Political organizations are so strongly entrenched, the intrigue behind closed doors so baffling, that he is often restricted merely to casting his vote for a candidate whose name he may never before have heard.

Beyond these considerations, there is a test that goes deeper, to the very roots: Are those who live in a democ-

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racy, each according to his ability, willing to make personal sacrifice so that popular government may have the best that they can contribute? Or, will they be so interested in the "fatness" and "sweetness" of their own occupations and pleasures, that they will not respond to the call for civic service, be it large or small? If the attitude is a refusal to be disturbed and to make sacrifice, particularly on the part of those who are in favored circumstances, how is it possible for just and efficient self-government to be maintained? Control then easily passes to the "bramble," a determined individual or a class-seeking minority, whose will is imposed upon all.

A few years ago, the late James Bryce delivered at Yale University a series of addresses to which he gave the title "Hindrances to Good Citizenship." Popular government, he showed, requires of its citizens the exercise of higher qualities than under any other form. He named these qualities as three: intelligence, self-control, and conscience. He then proceeded to specify the three chief foes: private self-interest, party or the factional spirit, and indolence. Indolence, he declared, was the most destructive, for wherever it prevails intelligence, self-control, and conscience cannot function.

It is said that ordinarily only about one-half of the number of qualified citizens cast their vote in elections, the minimum participation in government. The percentage may vary when candidates or issues make an exceptional

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appeal. But the discrepancy between those who might vote and those who do is always large. Following an election, an investigation was made in a prominent city as to the reasons for failure to vote. In some instances there were legitimate explanations, but the main cause was indolence. If the willingness to vote is found in only about one half of the citizens, what of the service which calls for greater effort and devotion?

There is no warrant in the Bible for the injection of religion into politics, or for ecclesiastical interference. But the Bible does inculcate the spirit of responsibility and sacrifice in the performance of every duty, public as well as private. The trees finally turned to the bramble because the better favored among them refused to serve. Men and women of ability and education may not always be invited by the people to "wave over them." They may not invariably receive the recognition which their position or talents deserve. But they can always exert influence. If they are actually willing to respond, they will be of use somewhere; and government by the people "shall not perish from the earth."

THE DIVINENESS OF THE NATURAL

A common way of thinking which directly affects our religious life is to make a distinction between the divine and the natural. By the term, natural, we refer in a general way to the visible, material universe, to the world of nature. We speak, for instance, of the natural beauty of the landscape, with its mountains and forest, or of the forces working ceaselessly in the world, which, though they are invisible, are yet regarded as natural. In a popular sense, the word also suggests the daily life of man. His sleeping and waking, his need of food, his normal interests and activities constitute, we say, his natural life. Looking more deeply, science has investigated the origin of man, traced the course of his gradual development, and now seeks to explain both the structure of his body and his mental endowments by natural laws.

But in our religious life the belief has been held for centuries, that above the world of nature, with its inherent forces, there is another world of the divine, often called the supernatural. We find this belief stated as fundamental by Paul, Augustine, and many others in the history of Christianity. It is made the basis for an entire scheme of theology, and held to be necessary for man to

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accept as part of the plan for his salvation. This supernatural world has been conceived, not as contradictory to the world of nature, but as supplementary and superior to it, the realm of infinite and eternal values as compared with the finite and perishable things of earth. It borders closely upon the natural, and evidence of its reality and messages from it are given to men from time to time for their assurance and guidance.

From this belief two far-reaching results have followed. One is that men have tended to lose sight of the divine significance of the events and experiences of their daily life. If the familiar, ordinary occurrences of each day belong in the natural order, events which have a divine character must be found, chiefly at least, only in the exceptional. So men have eagerly sought for signs of the divine in unusual happenings, in miracles granted to favored persons in special need; while the greater witness of the commonplace has been overlooked. The story is related of a man who said to a friend: "I was in a railroad accident; a car was overturned in which were forty people, and I was the only one who escaped injury. Wasn't it a miracle?" To which the friend replied: "I know of a greater one: I was in a train which carried four hundred passengers; we rode for days across the continent, and we all reached there safely." Grateful as one should be for escaping unharmed in a wreck, is there not more reason to be thankful to God for our unbroken safety, for the

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knowledge that has been gained and applied for our benefit, and for the character of the men upon whose fidelity and skill we constantly depend?

A second consequence of making this distinction between the natural and the supernatural is the conflict of religion, or perhaps we should say theology, with science. Too often the divine has been made equivalent to man's ignorance, in itself a fatal error. It has been thought of as the realm of what man did not know and could not know by using the mind that had been given him. But investigation has gone on, patient and fearless, and as discoveries have been made, the power of the divine has, in this sense, seemed to be steadily reduced. So it has been said, "Science has captured from religion one stronghold after another and annexed it to its domain." On the other side, science has been charged with attempting to destroy a belief essential to man's eternal welfare, and coercive measures, sometimes of the severest character, have been taken to restrict its activities.

But is the division into two worlds, the natural and the supernatural, correct? Is it true to fact, and is it really necessary to faith? That man is dependent upon a Power greater than his own, and that he can enter into personal relationship with that Power, we believe can be demonstrated and verified in actual experience. That the life of the spirit is the true life of man, and that the spiritual realities in the universe are boundless in extent and of per-

DIVINENESS OF THE NATURAL

manent duration, are beliefs which are now probably more generally accepted than ever before. Science itself, with its new conception of matter and its detection of marvelous invisible forces, lends support to the conviction that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."¹

But do we live in two worlds? Is not the universe and all it contains, as the word we use indicates, one creation? Says Professor Kirtley F. Mather: "We do well to make such distinctions as those implied by the contrasts between matter and spirit, mind and soul, but those terms should not blind us to the fact that such contrasts are merely superficial or are imposed by the inadequacy of our own minds. They do not actually signify a fundamental cleavage of the universe into two interwoven worlds."²

We declare our belief in "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and we ought to think and to live according to that faith. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," declared the Psalmist.³ And this also was the faith of Jesus. He lived in His Father's house. He saw in everything a manifestation of God, in the earth which produces of itself,⁴ in the verdure and beauty of the fields,⁵ in the shining of the sun and the falling of the rain,⁶ and in the abundant provisions of nature which were His gifts for the needs of men.⁷ He bade men think of

¹ II Corinthians 4:18.

² *Science in Search of God*, p. 19.

³ Psalm 24:1.

⁴ Mark 4:28.

⁵ Matthew 6:28-30.

⁶ Matthew 5:45.

⁷ Matthew 6:26-33.

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God, not as afar off, in some other realm, but as working ceaselessly in the world, to be known as our eyes are open to see and our hearts ready to respond. He used the common incidents of life as the most fitting illustrations of His teaching, and He taught that every duty of daily life has its divine import. Life, He showed, has endless possibilities of spiritual development, both here and hereafter, but life everywhere has the same laws which must be obeyed. "Either the undivineness of the natural, or the unnaturalness of the divine," it has been said, "is the source of all error."

When we have a faith like that of Jesus, the unfortunate and confusing separation of life and of the world into two compartments will completely disappear. Every experience will have its divine significance, and each incident will open the way to a fresh discovery of the reality of the spiritual. If the divine in the former sense of a world apart is no longer tenable, we gain the far more inspiring conception that all life and all nature are filled with revelation. As further discoveries are made we may have to readjust our religious life to new ways of thinking, just as men did a few centuries ago when the earth was found to be, not the fixed center of the universe, but a revolving planet. But each step forward will be into a roomier, more majestic universe, in which faith will find place for greater triumphs.

DIVINENESS OF THE NATURAL

I fear not Thy withdrawal; more I fear
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou,
Walking in Thy garden still, communest with men,
Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

“TELL US PLAINLY”

It is related that on one occasion when Jesus was walking in the porch of the temple, a group of men came to Him and asked: “How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.”¹

The request which they made reflected the attitude of many people in His day. They were attracted to Jesus. They saw the nobility of His life, His deep sympathy with men, His constant ministry to the sick and the poor, His personal courage as He was increasingly exposed to suspicion and attack. They were also attracted by His words, for He spoke as no other man did. He taught of the Kingdom of God to be established upon earth, which was their highest aspiration and hope, and which He said was at hand.

Still they were perplexed as to what to think of Him. They did not feel certain as to who He was, or what He intended to do. Was He the Christ, the long-expected Messiah, whose high office it was to bring in the Kingdom? Why then did He not declare His divine mission by showing them some convincing sign?² If the reign of God was at last, as He said, to be known upon earth, where

¹ John 10:24.

² Matthew 12:38; compare 27:40.

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was the evidence of its coming which men could see?³ If He was Christ, why did He not tell them plainly, and not keep them in suspense? Before they were willing to follow Him and to give Him their allegiance, He must show them adequate proof concerning Himself and the nature of His work. Otherwise, they would feel justified in remaining aloof.

But Jesus declined to answer in the way that they wished. His teaching was never obscure. No method of imparting truth plainly has ever surpassed or equaled His use of parables. He discussed with men daily things they could see, and His sayings were always applicable to life. But He did not give answers for them to learn and repeat by rote. He desired men to think and to discern the truth for themselves. As for granting them a sign, He rebuked the request, saying that the desire for it did not indicate men of faith but a "faithless" generation.⁴ He was not willing to be known and followed as a doer of wonders.⁵ To those who asked Him on this occasion as to who He was, He replied by saying that the works which He did in His Father's name bore witness of Him.⁶

By calling attention to His works, we can see that Christ pointed to the way by which men can definitely find the answer to the question concerning Himself. Throughout His entire ministry, Christ always insisted that if men

³ Matthew 16:1-3.

⁴ Matthew 12:39.

⁵ Mark 1:34-38.

⁶ John 10:25.

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were attracted by His works and wished to know Him who did them, then they must do works of the same character. They must learn through doing. If they rightly considered His deeds they would find that the power in them was an impelling witness. Proof was not a matter of having someone tell them plainly; it must be sought and discovered in the one place where alone proof can be found, in knowledge gained by first-hand experience, in the evidence which doing affords. Christ did not care in the slightest for mere verbal subscription, for He saw that it meant nothing real. "Why call ye me Lord," He asked, "and do not the things that I say?"⁷ But in the Gospel according to John, the process of knowing upon which Jesus relied is correctly stated: "If a man will to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."⁸

In every realm, this is the one way by which adequate knowledge or proof is gained. It must be known in experience. Apart from first-hand experience, it is at best only accepted on the report of somebody else. There is a suggestive phrase used by the author of the Fourth Gospel where he speaks of "he that doeth the truth."⁹ One may ask of a traveler in China, "tell us plainly of the country and of the customs of the people." He may do so accurately and vividly, and our information may be increased. But to know the country for ourselves we must

⁷ Luke 6:46. ⁸ John 7:17. ⁹ John 3:21.

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actually go there. In science, the test of truth is always by experiment. Einstein propounds a new theory of relativity about which most of us have the desire "to be told plainly." But only those who are capable and willing to do the work of verification really know what it is. In education, a lecture may be clarifying and possibly inspiring; but more and more it is realized that if students are not to be simply receptacles of others' thoughts, that is, if they are to be trained in the ability to think and to know for themselves, they must make the investigations and the discoveries. To learn how to swim one must go, not just near, but into, the water.

There are many today whose attitude toward Christ is like that of the men who came to Him in Jerusalem. They are attracted by His life, they see the value of His teaching, and are quite ready to grant that the world would be a far better place in which to live if His standard were applied. But they are confused concerning Him. If He is divine as well as human, why cannot this be clearly demonstrated? "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? Tell us plainly." The question is quite natural. Men who are scientifically trained rightly want proof. To make any affirmation without evidence to support it is not only thoughtless, but morally wrong.

But it is possible to have proof. Divinity is a hard term to define, unfortunately obscured by theological distinctions and controversies. But whoever sincerely seeks to

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have a deeper insight into the life of Christ, and to understand the nature of His revelation of God, has open to him the way. He can do His work and make the discovery for himself in experience. Perhaps the divine significance of His life will not be comprehended at once. To discover truth for one's self is a high attainment, and may necessitate a long training. But it will be won finally. When Jesus selected His disciples, He did not demand that they first define who He was. His direction was simply: "Follow me." But after months of association with Him, as they engaged in His work, He asked them what they thought of Him. Then Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It was his discovery; and Christ spoke of it as revealed to him, not by man, but by the Father.¹⁰

¹⁰ Matthew 16:13-17.

THE DREAMERS

In the story of Joseph, one of the best short stories ever written, it is related that when his brothers saw him wandering in the field, they said, derisively: "Behold this dreamer cometh"; and they sought to get rid of him.¹ We can easily understand their resentment toward Joseph. He was the favorite son of his father, who presented him with enviable gifts. He was also given to asserting his superiority over the other members of the family, a trait which even his father rebuked; and he talked a strange language about the sun and the stars making obeisance to him.

Possibly a less violent and a more good-natured hazing than he received would have been salutary. But he was seized and sold as a slave to be carried away into Egypt, where the harsh discipline of his lot soon drove out his irritating conceit.

Still, he did not lose his youthful confidence that he had a large work to do. He remained the dreamer, and the interpreter of dreams. When he was put in jail for resisting the allurements of a captain's wife, he continued to cultivate this faculty. He studied the events which were happening in the world, and he had the insight to see their

¹ Genesis, 37:50.

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significance. He looked forward into the future, and in his dreaming reflected upon new and comprehensive plans affecting the welfare of many peoples.

Finally, his opportunity came. He was summoned before the king as one who might help to solve a perplexing matter, and then his ability stood him in good stead. In the crisis, when "the famine was sore in the land," he was given authority to carry out his plans, and then it was that this dreamer, at whom his brothers sneered, became the one to whom they and the dwellers "in all the lands" owed their lives.

There is always this connection between dreams, when they are founded on true insight and imagination, and the benefits which ultimately follow from them. Whenever a dreamer comes, he is invariably thought queer by his more practical and dull-minded associates. He usually has his idiosyncrasies of manner, may wear a colored coat or else neglect his appearance. He wanders alone in the field, speaks in strange phrases, and has perhaps, especially in youth, an annoying conceit and an air of superiority. But if he has patience and insight, studies critically and intelligently the events of his day, if he can discern something of what lies ahead and can form large conceptions of what may be achieved, then, sooner or later, the day will come when it will be seen that this dreamer is entitled to rank among the men by whom the world is advanced.

THE DREAMERS

History is rich in illustrations of this truth. Actuated by the belief that the world holds more than is dreamed of in men's ordinary philosophy, the pioneers and discoverers in science have had their visions. Jenner, wandering and closely observing in the fields of England, dreamed of a new method for checking the scourge of smallpox. Ridiculed and "bitterly attacked by both physicians and clergymen" for his recommendation that it was to be overcome by vaccination, he yet persisted in advocating it; and to him men the world over now owe their immunity from that dreaded plague.

Dr. Charles W. Stiles had the strange notion that the indolence and dullness of many "poor whites" in the South were due rather to physical disease than to mental or moral defect. "Yet he could not mention this without exciting uproarious laughter—even in the presence of scientific men."² But he continued to dream, until with the aid of a friendly sympathizer, he proved that by getting rid of a parasite, known as the hookworm, new energy and determination were released in the lives of thousands.

When Professor S. P. Langley was conducting his experiments to construct a machine, heavier than air, that would fly, he was chided with wasting his efforts "in a field where success is doubtful, and where failure is likely

² *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Vol. I, p. 98. It was through the interest of Mr. Page that Dr. Stiles was encouraged in the application of his theory, whereby the habits of a whole population were transformed.

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to bring discredit, however undeserved, on scientific work."³ When the Wright brothers, who had the same dream, were testing the resistance of the air at Kitty Hawk, they, too, were jeered at. Even their first demonstration of the actual power to fly received a mere mention in the newspapers. But twenty-five years later, an entire nation paid them tribute, for within that period the headlines had announced that a man had flown across the Atlantic; and the time is not far distant when the air will be a common highway.

In social reform and in man's spiritual life, there is this same indebtedness to the dreamer for the progress that has been made. The prophets were dreamers. They had their larger conceptions of God; they proclaimed new standards of righteousness; they had their vision of a day when a new spirit would be in men's hearts,⁴ when war should cease and the Prince of Peace should reign. And when He appeared, He was the greatest dreamer ever known. He also was misunderstood and opposed as were the prophets before Him. The followers of Christ were accused of "turning the world upside down."⁵ But today, His dream of showing forgiveness to enemies, of men guided by good will and coöperating in fellowship, is accepted in principle as the only practicable solution of our difficulties, even

³ Cited from the *Popular Science Monthly*, by Mark Sullivan, *Our Times*, Vol. I, p. 368.

⁴ Jeremiah 31:31-34.

⁵ Acts 17:6.

THE DREAMERS

though it is not widely adopted in practice. Of each successive stage in the world's upward movement, it could be written:

And therefore today is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling,
And the multitude is enlisted
In the faith the fathers resisted;
And scorning the dream of tomorrow,
Are bringing to pass as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
The dream that was scorned yesterday.

"Where there is no vision the people perish."⁶ We may well make this proverb the measure of the age in which we live. The real criterion of a nation's greatness and strength is not in its prosperity, its far-flung commerce, or its military might, but in that intangible thing we call vision. Are there dreamers among the people? Those who have the ability to look beneath the outward show of events, who can discern the signs of the times, and who are stirred by loftier conceptions of life and of human accomplishment? And how do the people respond to these dreamers? What is their attitude toward them? When they see one of their number approach, do they deride him, saying: "Behold this dreamer cometh," and, like Joseph's brethren, seek to suppress and to get rid of him? Or do they receive him? Are they willing to learn to share in the vision he sees, to perceive its truth for them-

⁶ Proverbs 29:18.

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selves, and thenceforth resolve not to be disobedient unto it?

We have our dreamers today. They are the men and the women, young and old, who dream of plans to banish poverty; of beautified cities, free from the evils of overcrowding and slums; of a humane solution of industrial conflicts; of religion without intolerance and ecclesiastical division, the unfailing inspiration of charity; of the substitution of peaceful adjustments in place of the folly and evil of war.

How we shall respond to the dreamers among us, is still to be determined. There are indications favorable and unfavorable. But of this we may be sure: our progress and our happiness depend upon them.

Great hail we cry to the comers
From the dazzling unknown shore,
Bring forth your sun and your summers,
And renew us on earth as of yore;
You shall teach us your songs' new numbers,
And things that we dreamed not before,
Yea, in spite of a dreamer that slumbers,
And a singer that sings no more.

GOD AND THE POWER OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

One of the most subtle influences causing men to leave God out of their thoughts is the feeling that man himself is quite able to do his work and to achieve his own destiny without the aid of any higher power. This assumption that man does not need God for what he can do himself, may be noticed in a frequent comment as to prayer. "There is nothing left to do," it is said, "but pray." Nothing *left* to do: that is, in a difficult situation, men first do everything of which they are capable. If that is sufficient, there is no need to seek divine aid. Prayer is to be thought of only after men's efforts have failed. Then there remains as the only possible chance of relief, to wish hard, and to call it prayer.

This attitude is well illustrated in the story of the small boy who had wandered a short distance, but had somehow lost his way. As night was coming on he began to be frightened, so there being nothing left to do, he prayed earnestly that the path homeward might be shown him. But in running about he soon came to a hilltop where the lights in the village could be plainly seen. Whereupon

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he stopped praying and said: "Never mind, God; I can see Aunt Jennie's house now."

Within our time, this feeling that God is not necessary for what men are competent to achieve by their own ability, has widely spread. It has steadily grown with the realization of the ever greater things which man has proved he can accomplish. By the diligent use of their minds to gain knowledge, by applying what they learn to human welfare, mysteries hitherto regarded as known only to God have been explained, ills and evils from which men have long suffered have been done away. A few years ago a distinguished physician and author wrote for a magazine an article to which he gave the significant title, "Man's Redemption by Man."¹ "The Psalmist will have it," he says, "that no man may redeem his brother, but this redemption of his body has been bought at the price of those who have sought out nature's processes by study and experiment." Since the article was written, discoveries have been made which make for the redemption of man's mental ailments as well; and by the same method of study and experiment, further triumphs in all realms are confidently predicted. Once typhoid fever and yellow fever were thought to be scourges which men might possibly prevent by prayer. Now we can get rid of them by our own power, simply by being inoculated, draining the

¹ Dr. William Osler, *American Magazine*. Vol. LXXI, p. 248. December, 1910.

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marshes, and exterminating the mosquito. Not many decades ago, a man who attended a church service in New York is said to have asked the prayers of the congregation "because he was about to make the long and perilous journey to Rochester." Now trains run on regular schedule, equipment has been made strong and comfortable, protection is afforded by a mechanical system of block signals; and even the person of religious habits is likely to think more of getting a seat in a Pullman car than of asking special favor of Providence.

So is it everywhere. Cataracts can be harnessed to bring forth light, deserts can be irrigated to blossom as the rose, the air above the earth can be navigated, and the sea beneath, invisible forces can be utilized to carry messages with incredible rapidity around the world; all this and much more has been achieved by men, as they have "sought out nature's processes." Where, then, is the need of God? Why should men call upon Him? In some quarters, it is more than intimated that a belief in Him may be explained simply as a fading survival of childhood training, the dwindling inheritance of a former age, or at most the projection of a "wish-fulfilment" into the present unknown, on the part of timorous people who are aware that they are not among the competent.

But of course this is not all there is in the picture. The sketch that has been made does not show all of the facts. We have been freed, it is true, from many physical limi-

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tations; our material comfort and power have been enormously increased. But have our cultural attainments, our spiritual capacity and insight grown proportionately? That our progress in these respects has not kept pace with our achievements in other fields, is well known to those who have a knowledge of history, and are in a position to make discriminating judgments. We have not surpassed the art of the Greeks, nor the ethical and spiritual idealism of the prophets of Israel, even though we are not restricted by their often crude surroundings and have far more available knowledge. That we have not advanced further, with all the means that we possess, in realizing Jesus' conceptions of life, individual and social, is a strange and sometimes discouraging fact. And the question is: Why? To what is this failure to make the greatest progress due? What is it we have too generally ignored and not made more use of?

In place of boasting of what has been done, we have to consider: Why is it that we have not achieved more? Why is there so much poverty, ignorance, and suffering in the world, which might be largely overcome if we applied the knowledge and the resources which we now possess? Why are conditions in industry, in politics, in international relations, far from satisfactory? How came it that the most terrible war in history, with its slaughter of millions by a machinery of wholesale destruction such as the world had never before known, took place in mod-

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ern times? It was not due to the inability of men to conceive of the splendors of scientific attainment and of the civilization to be based upon it. In the leading nations involved in the war, education was highly developed and widespread. The failure was in men's weakness in curbing selfish ambition, in their neglect to make use of their unrivalled powers for the establishment of peace. Something was lacking in their lives. There was a wrong outlook, which admittedly it is our business to change.

Shall this lack now be supplied? Shall there be a new and saner outlook? How can men gain a greater capacity to do, and an accession of power for still further accomplishment? With this as our aim, faith in God, instead of being a vague desire to have something done for us, becomes the basis for our more effective endeavor. Establishing our faith upon a true perception of the facts, spiritual as well as physical and learned by "study and experiment," we seek to enter into a right relation to Him so that men may exercise to the utmost the power which they have.

As the first step to this end, we realize that though man has the responsibility of performing his own tasks and of working out his destiny, yet both his work and the resources with which to do it, are given him. Whether this is "the best of all possible worlds" or not, it is surely an excellent world in which to work. If we think it needs improving, as it undoubtedly does, we are not likely to be out

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of a job. Not only is our work given us, but the means for doing it are given also. The very possibility of human achievement depends upon having something to do, and the provision for doing it. Both of these are supplied to us, ready at hand.

This is at the foundation of our belief in God. We think of Him as "the Author of every good and perfect gift," and among His best gifts to men is work, with ample resources for its performance. But the necessity for work comes not as a command of master to slave: it is the invitation to share in a great enterprise. Paul speaks of the "whole world waiting for the coming of the sons of God," and of our being "laborers together" with Him. With human nature as it is, man grows in achieving ability by work, and the dignity of the task in which he shares is a legitimate ground for pride.

The results of man's efforts are brought to pass and are guaranteed by the unfailing operation of laws. These also are in the universe as we find it. We can learn of them and use them, but we did not create nor can we change them. As we rise in our thought of God, we think of Him as working through laws. His world is not a fickle creation. It does not have to be "interfered with" by miracle. The constant miracle is its dependability. To fancy that as we learn the laws of the universe God is ruled out, is to make the absurd deduction that because we discover how He does things, He does not do them at all. Because

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laws are ceaselessly operative, always to be counted upon, the discovery and employment of them by man marks an epoch, and they are the basis of his confidence for the future.

For the utmost achievement, man needs the inspiration of spiritual fellowship with God. All that we have learned of man's mental development demonstrates his need of contacts with other personalities. If these are denied him, he becomes abnormal and queer. So we think of God as the supreme spiritual personality with Whom man may have contact and so grow in healthy spiritual capacity. Just as a man who works day by day at a machine, monotonously pulling a lever back and forth, becomes dulled in spirit and listless in action, so is man's spirit dulled if to him the universe in which he works seems only a machine. But whoever has the insight to see the reality of those forces in the universe which can best be characterized as personal, has open to him the highest source of inspiration.

Says Ruskin: "All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it . . . only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows he can build a good dome at Florence. . . . Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else—only they do not expect their fellowmen to fall down and worship them; they have a curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling

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that the greatness is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them."²

When there is the recognition of the divine in every worthy achievement, in the task that is given, in the laws of its fulfillment, and in the inspiration for its performance, all of man's powers will be fully utilized, and there will be no limit to what he can do.

² "Modern Painters," *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, Vol. V, p. 331.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

WHY JESUS TAUGHT BY PARABLE

The first impression which was made by Jesus upon those who heard Him was that He was an exceptional teacher. He immediately attracted men both by the interesting subjects of which He spoke and also by the stimulating freshness of His manner of speaking. There was in His teaching a distinctive quality which caused them to feel that He was not like the teachers whom they were accustomed to hear. He spoke, it is said, as no other man did.¹ In noticeable contrast with the learned scribes, He did not weary them with numerous citations of what others had said, repeat rules of conduct and moral maxims, or discuss the subtleties as to what was permitted or forbidden by law. Rather He taught with the quiet authority of His own insight and understanding, which He sought not to impose, but to impart.

His characteristic way of teaching was by parable. So frequently did He use this form that we have the statement: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them."² He belonged to a people who were gifted as storytellers; from the days of Joseph it had been a popular

¹ John 7:46. ² Matthew 13:34, Mark 4:33-34.

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method of instruction. But He employed the art with an originality and a resourcefulness which make Him pre-eminent. He had a matchless, creative ability to embody His teaching in vivid, unforgettable illustrations. The first three gospels, which contain most of His sayings, abound in parables unequaled in any literature. Some are recorded apparently as they were related: as for instance, the parable of the Prodigal Son, said to be "the finest short story ever written." In other cases they are preserved only in part, as their general nature and a few striking phrases were later recalled. When we read the parables now, those which are completely given and the fragments as well, we can still see their perfection and feel their appeal. They have the marks and the force of coming from a master-teacher, and they constitute the most trustworthy source for a knowledge of what He taught.

But Jesus' teaching by parable has a deeper significance than that of showing His superlative skill as a narrator of stories. There are many indications that the method was deliberately selected, and for a definite purpose. From the way He taught, we can thus learn His object in dealing with men. We can see how He endeavored to quicken their minds, the kind of thinking which He desired to arouse in them. Most important of all, we can perceive the response in their lives which through His teaching He sought to produce.

One primary aim may be seen in the fact that parables

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can be easily understood. As He related them, they were all drawn from scenes and incidents with which the people to whom He spoke were fully familiar: the sower going out to sow; the woman who mends a garment or who mixes leaven in meal; the man who is entrusted with money or the care of an estate; the merchant who seeks to purchase a valuable pearl; the son who spends his inheritance, and the resentful son who stays at home; the traveler who finds a wounded man by the roadside. The descriptions were so graphic and lifelike, so true to human experience, that the varied situations and characters could be universally recognized, and the truths which they illustrated were apparent to all.

Thus religion as Jesus taught it was not involved in the intricacies of dogma and theological definition. It did not require an elaborate exposition of scriptural text or the discussion of any theory of divine revelation. His religion was not presented as a complete explanation of all the mysteries of the universe, nor made to depend upon the acceptance of any particular view of the world's physical origin. It was primarily concerned with living. It was intimately associated with everyday life, and could be seen and illustrated in ordinary events and common duties. Its simple but profound principles could be comprehended by everyone, and they were to apply to all the relationships and activities of men.

Another object in His use of parables was to stimulate

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men to think. There is no intimation in the gospels that Jesus ever gave to men any formulated statement which they were to accept and recite by rote. He prepared no concise code of ethics, nor did He recommend any legislation to compel people to be good by law. The finespun system of legalized morality and regulation of the Scribes and the Pharisees, He did not endorse. On the contrary, in teaching men by parable He showed them with clarity and persuasiveness great conceptions and ideals of life. His plainly evident aim was to inspire them with high purpose and to create in them a new spirit. Each parable He related is centered about a single, far-reaching principle. The hearer, or reader, is called upon to see this for himself, to be convinced of its truth by its inherent appeal, and thenceforth to act upon his own initiative in putting it into effect. As one instance showing this to be his aim, consider how He answered the question: "Who is my neighbor?" by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan.³ By this form of teaching, He encouraged, He compelled, men to think; to act from principle rather than by dictate; to be guided by purpose and to exercise judgment.

And such was the response of those who heard Him. They knew the satisfaction of using their minds. They felt the mental release and the new confidence which came from the intelligent comprehension of a clearly seen truth. It was quite natural that they were amazed, and that their

³ Luke 10:25-37.

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comment concerning Him was: "He taught as having authority, and not as the scribes."⁴

Parables, further, serve to reveal the divine significance of daily life. In reading the parables, nothing is more striking than to see how circumstances and events which we would call commonplace were to Him filled with meanings that enable men to know God. The man who rescues his ox from a pit on the Sabbath day, the shepherd searching for his lost sheep, the owner of a vineyard paying his helpers, the falling of the rain, the flowers in the field, the feeding of birds, the earth "which brings forth of itself" and the ripening of grain—what could be more familiar than scenes such as these? And yet how revealing of God and of His relations to men do they become as Jesus utilized them in teaching by parable.

Whoever would understand the purpose of Jesus and His way whereby men are to know the fullness of life, let him study the parables. He will discover that vital religion is not an obscure body of doctrine, but that it can be understood by every one: its foremost concern is invariably with daily living. This is the "simplicity" that was in Christ.⁵ He will find that we are expected to think, to reflect, to see for ourselves; for Jesus had the confidence that as truth is perceived, men will increasingly gain the ability to apply it independently in the conduct of life. From the parables, he will also learn to detect the divine-

⁴ Mark 1:21-22.

⁵ II Corinthians 11:3.

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ness of the familiar and the commonplace. He will possess the insight to discover the spiritual values and the revelatory import of all human experience.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

THE TEST OF IDEALISM

And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Mark IV: 1-9.

* This parable is usually regarded as an allegory to illustrate the varying responses of men to the teaching of

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Christ. His words, which are the seed freely sown, are heard by all alike, but all lives are not equally fruitful. Like the uneven soil in a field, men differ both in character and in circumstances. They are productive or unprofitable according to their inner qualities, in proportion to the force which they can exert in overcoming adverse external influences. An allegorical explanation is given in the Gospels, which may have been derived from an application that Jesus at one time made. But originally, the parable was told to illustrate a common experience of the sower. It portrays figuratively a situation which Jesus Himself had to face; and its purpose is to teach an important lesson to those who, as His followers, would inevitably undergo a similar experience.

When Jesus proclaimed His message of the coming of the Kingdom and bade men prepare for it, He was soon aware that many of His hearers would not give to Him and His cause their unfailing support. At first the multitudes followed Him, for He was an unusual teacher whose stimulating appeal was recognized by all. His obvious sympathy with the sick and the needy was shown by the healing and help He brought to them. His fame as one who had the power to cure, spread everywhere. But when He declared that He did not want men to believe in Him as a worker of miracles and signs,¹ and insisted that they were to repent and to make their lives conform to the

¹ Mark 8:11-12.

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high ethical standards of the Kingdom, then, as was quite noticeable, their interest and devotion began to flag.

There were some who, as they listened, felt the truth of His words and the power of His ideal, but as they went their way their thoughts were distracted by other things. Their daily occupation and affairs claimed ere long their whole attention and time. Their momentary interest in the Kingdom was entirely forgotten. Upon them the teaching of Jesus was as the seed which fell by the roadside, "and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up."

Others who heard Him were superficial in character. Immediately responsive and enthusiastic, they yet had not the capacity for sustained effort. Here the seed fell upon rocky ground where there was only a thin layer of earth. The blades soon appeared, but having little root they quickly withered.

Among His hearers there were those who might have given invaluable support to the cause of the Kingdom, but they lacked the hardihood and the determination to do so. Their lives were restricted by circumstances which they were too weak to resist. They were "choked with cares and riches and pleasures," and brought no fruit to perfection.

Judged by outward appearances, what had Jesus accomplished? Of the crowds who flocked to hear Him, how many were there who, having caught His vision, could be counted upon to give Him undeviating loyalty and to

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make the necessary sacrifices? Much that He attempted to do apparently brought no permanent results. Yet Jesus was not discouraged. He never spoke or acted as though He had devoted His life to a forlorn hope or a lost cause. He kept on proclaiming His message, aiding men whenever possible, just as the sower continues to cast his seed. Though His efforts often appeared to come to naught, still there was a portion of the field where the seed would grow. Here it fell upon propitious soil. It lodged in the lives of men who had the requisite qualities and courage. From them, He knew, would come the rewarding harvest, some yielding thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold. Their labor would come to fruition by a power in them like that which causes the earth to bring forth, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

Thus as a situation confronting the sower, the teaching of the parable is inspiringly clear. For there is no experience in life which so tries and tests any person who strives for an ideal as to realize that what he hoped to accomplish seemingly amounts to little, or perhaps for the time being, fails. In whatever field a man's efforts may be exerted, the experience is a common one. He may try to improve politics by ridding it of corruption, by the enlistment of a larger and more intelligent popular support; he may seek new standards in business which would reduce unemployment and increase human welfare; he may

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aim to make popular religion more truly embody Christ's spirit of tolerance and charity and good will. But he will surely not immediately succeed. He will find that men respond in precisely the same manner as is illustrated in the parable. There will be those who listen, it may be with sympathy, but whose interest is soon lost in absorption in other things; those who are at first enthusiastic but whose conviction is not deep; those who plead the burden of numerous demands and who are unwilling to reduce their customary pleasures. In proportion as the ideal is in advance of the time, so are the visible evidences of success likely to be meager. As with Jesus, opposition, due to misunderstanding and distorted report, may spring up like sharp thorns to choke the grain.

Then it is that a man is strongly tempted to despair. He may feel that as nothing has been accomplished, it is useless to try. He may consider that ideals are only illusions which the practical realities of the world disprove. He may become cynical of human nature, see only the folly and sluggishness of men, and instead of being a leader degenerate into a common scold. If so, he has not the spirit of Christ; he will miss numberless opportunities; he will pass by the places where the harvest may finally be reaped. His task is to keep on with his work, undismayed. It is within no man's ability to foretell what the outcome will be. Let him look to the quality of his seed, make sure that it has in it a germinating power, and cast it continually. A handful

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will fall where the soil is favorable, perhaps in a spot from which little was expected.

In every important advance in history, the new idea has first been grasped and announced by some one of vision. It has usually neither been seen nor accepted by the majority of his contemporaries. The masses have been largely indifferent. But in each instance there has been the small company who devoted themselves to the new movement, who had the courage to persist, and in time the results of their efforts have been multiplied an hundredfold. This has been the case in the spread of education, in the freeing of slaves, in the gaining of the franchise for men and women alike, and it is seen today in the growing movement to abolish war. For the work of this small group has not been unaided. In the spiritual world, as in the soil, there are the fructifying forces with which men may work, and upon which they can rely. One man sows and another waters, but God gives the increase.

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

THE NEED OF TRAINING

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:24-30.

In relating this parable Jesus' aim was to point out to His followers how their work should be done if they were to avoid the ineffectiveness of mistaken action. He sought to warn them against a natural impulse, and to train them

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to meet a familiar situation with true understanding which would lead to final success. Through association with Him, the disciples had learned that His purpose was to establish on earth the new order of the Kingdom, and they were stirred with enthusiasm. The things which prophets and kings had long desired to see, and had not seen, they were to witness. They were eager to see the Kingdom of God appear immediately and to share in its glory. But with this new hope they were also aware of the obstacles that stood in the way. They saw the evils and the wrongs from which men had suffered for centuries, and which must be removed. They chafed under the restrictions and the indignity of foreign rule, which they felt must be overthrown before justice and peace could be known upon earth. There are many indications in the Gospels of a strong revolutionary movement to break the hated Roman power by an armed uprising, in the belief that independence and prosperity would thereby be won. Convinced that their cause was just and that God would aid them, they were ardent to attack the evils in the world wherever they were seen, to destroy them completely, and to make right triumphant and secure.

Jesus sympathized with this feeling. He understood the hardship of the oppressed. He desired that His disciples should keep their enthusiasm and their ideal, but He saw the situation with deeper insight. What they wanted to do was right, but the method by which they sought to do

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it was wrong. If they attempted it in their way, they would fail. Their first need was to be trained in the ability to discriminate. In their efforts to destroy the evil, they must not be so blinded that they would destroy the good also.¹ They must have the skill to perceive the foundation upon which was based the new order of society He had come to establish. The Kingdom could not be taken by violence.² It was to be inaugurated by a change in the spirit of men. Its chief end was not the negative removal of evil, but the positive promotion of good. Accordingly the need was for men who, like trained tillers of the soil, were able to distinguish between the true and the false, who would exercise patience to permit the growth of good, and who would ultimately succeed because with their enthusiasm they combined intelligence.

The principle of the parable is quite evident if we keep in mind that the word usually translated "tares" really means an inferior grain, which in the early stages of growth so closely resembles wheat that only a skilled person could detect the difference.

While the parable had its special significance in the age in which Jesus lived, its teaching is of permanent import; and perhaps there never was a time when the necessity of giving heed to it was more urgent than at present.

¹ This point is well brought out by Phillips Brooks in his sermon on the parable.

² Matthew 11-12; compare 4:8-10.

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If we are to work effectively for the establishment of the Kingdom today, we should be not only zealous, but competent. It is indispensable that men be trained in judgment, in the ability to analyze any given situation, to perceive clearly the difference between the true and the false; for otherwise they will, with the best of motives, be quite likely not to cultivate wheat but to leave the field a barren waste.

In our industrial system there are, as we all recognize, evils to be overcome. Men, women, and even children, are too frequently compelled to work and to live amid conditions that are disgraceful and wrong. Human values are not always placed before profits; compensation is not always equitable, nor is there at present sufficient provision for old age; problems of responsibility for work and participation in rewards are by no means solved. But simply the impulse to go forth and pluck up the bad is not enough. In each instance there must first be accurate knowledge of the facts. The highest judgment is demanded to discover whatever there may be of good to be preserved, as well as of evil to be eliminated. Factors of worth and of promise must be detected and strengthened. With unflagging determination, and with no less patience, the end of making right human relations supreme must be sought. And the harvest of a proper organization of industry will surely be reaped.

Democracy at present has many obvious defects. There

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are portions of the field—sometimes the high places—where corruption is a rank growth. Popular endorsement of a measure is not the guarantee of right; the voice of the people is not the voice of God. Inefficiency and waste are widespread. Offices are not invariably held by men of foremost ability. But any attempt to pull up these “tares” with the result of pulling up the “wheat” of democracy also, would mean the destruction of the most valuable achievement in government which the ages have won. To submit to a dictatorship or the seizure of control by a class, or to permit the minute regulation of conduct by the centralization of power in an official bureaucracy, would make growth in liberty and in the discipline of self-government impossible.

In John Drinkwater's play, *Abraham Lincoln*, Lincoln is represented as making comment on the efforts of John Brown to liberate the slaves. He remarks: “But that's not the way it's to be done. And you can't do the right thing in the wrong way. That's as bad as the wrong thing.”

There are those who fear that religious faith is undermined by the investigations and theories of modern science. “A new present makes of necessity a new past,” and they are disturbed by the changed aspect in which old objects and long-hallowed beliefs now appear. With a sincere desire to defend faith, they would prevent, sometimes by law, the teaching of epoch-making discoveries,

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such as the theory of evolution, or put under the ban the method and conclusions of the thorough historical study of the Bible. But faith that is genuine and living needs no such protection. It can never be injured by truth. And any measures, however well meant, to strengthen belief by plucking out and destroying the spirit of inquiry, would both hamper the truth which makes men free and also render faith impotent.

We have constantly to remember that our real work, if we would be loyal to Christ, is primarily to plant and cultivate the good. If this is persistently done, then, as the harvest ripens, the difference between the wheat and the tares, the good and the evil, the true and the false, will increasingly appear. We should further have confidence that in the field of human endeavor, as in the growing of crops, the superior grain will, as it is seen, be naturally preferred to the inferior. In the long run, the true will survive and the spurious will be rejected. As men learn by experience, they will be able to know the tares which are to be burned, but the wheat they will gather into barns. This was the faith by which Christ lived, and upon which He desired men to act. "Every plant," He said, "which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."³ But the seed of the Kingdom will grow and spread till it covers the earth.⁴

³ Matthew 15-13.

⁴ Matthew 13:31-32.

THE PARABLE OF THE TOWER BUILDER COUNTING THE COST

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:28-33.

Jesus never wished any man to become His follower in the mistaken notion that the life of discipleship was easy. He did not offer men a way of escape from the responsibilities and temptations of the world by inviting them to withdraw to a monastery or some other place of sheltered retreat. He did not bid them seek to save their own souls and to contemplate the joys of another world to the neglect

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of the work to be done here. He did not promise them any immunity from the common experiences and hazards of living. On the contrary, He set before them a supreme task, to be undertaken at once, amid the conditions in which their life was placed. He insisted that to do this work demanded the consecration of all their powers, with the readiness as well to sacrifice everything, if need be their lives, for it.

Over and again Jesus stipulated that men understand clearly what discipleship meant. He presented it as loyalty to a cause which would involve them in conflict with many old and accepted practices. Its adherents, He said, would be misunderstood and opposed. He early foresaw the fate that awaited Him because of His own loyalty. It would bring death upon the cross. And He warned His disciples: "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."¹

So to all who were attracted to Him and who desired to join His company, He told this parable. The man who wishes to build a tower first sits down and computes the cost, whether he has wherewith to build it, "lest haply, after he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold him begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, but was not able to finish.'" Such was not to be the conduct of those who engaged in the

¹ John 15:20.

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work of Christ. It was not lightly to be undertaken, nor lightly abandoned. The cost must be computed in advance and they must be prepared to meet it. If they began without due thought and later quit, they would be themselves a laughingstock, and the cause would suffer. His disciples were to be men who, having foreseen what was involved, would have the determination to carry the task through to completion.

There is nothing that has more hindered the progress of Christ's religion in the world than the failure of those who profess it to count in advance the cost of discipleship. Sometimes the real nature of their work has been misconceived. It has been thought of mainly in terms of personal salvation in another world, instead of the transformation of this world into the likeness of God's Kingdom. Instead of paying the price of self-forgetful service, in honor preferring one another, men in the name of Christ have sought greatness by dominion and the exercise of authority. Religion has produced in many lives, in all ages, a sincere personal piety. But can it be said that the price has been paid of applying the incisive teachings of Christ to all the affairs of life? At the outbreak of the War it was distressingly plain that there were large areas of human relationship not governed by His spirit. It was all too evident that men had not considered sufficiently in advance the full extent of His demands, nor to meet them had they been willing to make the necessary sacrifices and

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changes in their way of living. Their vision had been blinded by a narrow nationalism, and Christ's purpose of uniting men in good will and brotherhood was dismissed as impracticable. In the tragedy of war it was learned that though the foundation had been laid, little had been done to complete the tower, and it brought the reproach of which Christ warned in the parable.

Young people are urged to take part in the work of the church. They may be expected to respond if they see that the church offers them an inspiring task, one that has in it the element of adventure, with real and perhaps dangerous duties to perform. Is it explained to them that membership means not alone satisfying the emotions, but the readiness to sacrifice for a high cause, and that if they are not prepared to see the work through it were better not to begin? Do they confuse the service of Christ with a merely negative goodness, with the observance of a certain set of rules and of forms, which can never enlist the full energies of men? Or are they asked to face squarely the requirements of this parable, with all that it implies for them, and for the kind of Christian work which is waiting to be done in the world today?

The two demands which the parable illustrates remain ever in force. There is the need to "sit down and count the cost" of applying Christ's principles to the whole of life, personally, in business, socially, and among nations; to think the task through; and further, the resolution must

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be made not to abandon the job until it is done. Only those who possess these two qualifications will Christ permit to be His followers.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

THE WORTH OF WITS

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Luke 16:1-8.

The difficulties that have been found in understanding this parable would seem to make it one of the "hard say-

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ings" of Jesus, such as occasionally perplexed the disciples when they heard Him speak.¹

Its ethical teaching is not at first apparent, and many interpretations have been given to explain its meaning. Here Jesus describes a man who held a position of trust to which he was not faithful; he was guilty of mismanagement and of graft. The day of detection finally came, and when he realized that his dishonesty could no longer be concealed, he set about to devise a plan for collecting the largest sum possible from the bad debts he had contracted. By so doing he hoped to appear to his employer in a favorable light, and perhaps to escape the penalty of being dismissed. Yet in the parable there is no word of censure for the man's misconduct; rather, it is said: "The lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely."

This is another instance of Jesus' method of selecting a scene or story which, by presenting a very sharp contrast in its external aspects, is used as an effective means to impress a principle.² Consider, He says, a man whose conduct was crafty and dishonorable. Even so, he used his wits; he showed resourcefulness and skill in making the most of the situation that confronted him. It was for this he was praised, "because he had done wisely." From which it follows: the stewards of Christ have need

¹ John 6:60.

² See the Parable of the Unprofitable Steward, pp. 143-147.

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to use all the intelligence and skill of which they are capable in performing the work that is entrusted to them. If resourceful thinking is commendable in a man who was not faithful, how much more is it to be expected and approved in men of fidelity?

Of all the parables related by Jesus, this is the one whose teaching is quite commonly neglected. How often it happens that men who are upright and who desire to serve Christ, yet fail to accomplish all that they might for His ends because they do not give to it their best intelligence. It frequently appears to be taken for granted that a good motive, or a negative integrity of "being as good as not being bad will allow," is quite enough, with little or no recognition that to advance Christ's Kingdom in the world demands, with sincerity of aim, all the intelligence and the utmost resourcefulness of which a man is capable. Good people do not always "act wisely," with the result that they may be outwitted by those who have less integrity but whose acts are directed by a keen mind. Too often evil continues to flourish and righteousness lags, because the workers of evil are "wise as serpents," while the believers in good, forgetting the combination made in Christ's saying, are content to be "as harmless as doves."³ Christ observed this, as is indicated in the comment with which the parable concludes: "For the sons of this world are for their generation wiser than the sons of light." It

³ Matthew 10:16.

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is true, no doubt, that a man's religion is not identical with his mental ability; it is not measured by his intelligence-coefficient. But religion does require all the intellect one has. And when the "sons of light" give heed to the teachings of this parable, they will disprove the saying, "anyone can be good, but it takes a smart man to be bad."

Why is it that political corruption in the community and in the nation goes on, sometimes for a long period and to a flagrant extent, in spite of the fact that by far the majority of citizens are honest and would like to have clean and efficient government? Is it not because those who profit by public plunder are so cunning and alert, so skillful in employing every device to promote their schemes? When their practices are detected, they may still escape punishment by making plausible excuse and by resorting to every legal technicality of defense. They are usually not men of superior intelligence, but they do use what they have. They succeed because good citizens are often indifferent, and fail to give to matters of government sufficient time and thought.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* it is related that when Mr. Greatheart was leading his party on the road to the Celestial City, they found an old man, obviously a pilgrim, lying asleep under a tree. They awoke him and asked who he was. Somewhat resentful at being disturbed, he replied that his name was "Honest," and that he came from the town of "Stupidity." Then said Mr. Great-

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heart: "Your town is worse than the city of Destruction itself."⁴

To establish peace and good will among men was a cause which Christ called upon all of His followers to serve. But it cannot triumph merely by wishing for it and by passing resolutions. With the will for peace must go the constructive thinking that creates peace. The fallacies that lurk in old ideas and age-long practices leading inevitably to conflict, must be convincingly exposed. Proper agencies and forms of international coöperation need to be intelligently thought out to meet the new needs of the age in which we live. If ways that make for peace are as diligently studied as are the ways to wage war, the pledge to settle all differences by amicable adjustment will become a visible reality. Let there be a well planned "strategy of peace" to take the place of the "strategy of war," and Christ's cause will win.

There is a further implication in this parable. Only in so far as good motives are wisely guided by clear thinking, can we be kept from making mistakes and blunders. Phillips Brooks once remarked that when the devil can deceive a good man with a good motive by prompting him to do the wrong thing, it is "the finest stroke of satanic art." All forms of intolerance, including the Inquisition, all opposition to progress and discovery in the name of religion, have been actuated by the motives of

⁴ Cited by Arthur T. Hadley in *The Moral Basis of Democracy*, p. 1.

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combating error and of promoting the faith. But the thinking was wrong—that is the pity of it—and the harm has been incalculable.

In the first of the great commandments, the requirement is to love God with all the mind. And the only acceptable way of loving Him with the mind is to make the fullest use of the talents He has entrusted to us.

THE PARABLE OF THE EMPTY HOUSE THE USED OR THE ABUSED LIFE?

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Matthew 12:43-45.

In this illustration Jesus makes use of the belief, common at the time, that a man whose behavior was erratic or violent was possessed by an evil or "unclean" spirit. Our present, more accurate, knowledge affords another explanation of these mental disorders; we speak of repressions and obsessions, especially of complexes, which are less picturesque terms than demons, though they seem to refer to the same things. Here, of course, Jesus was not sponsoring a theory of disease. He was simply employing in accordance with His method a familiar incident, as ordinarily viewed, to impress a moral and spiritual truth.

His teaching is, that whenever a man is freed from

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influences or forces that injure or debase him, his life cannot remain empty. When the control of the degrading spirit has been overcome, his actions must thenceforth be directed by an ennobling spirit. His released capacity and powers are to be employed for a new and higher purpose. If his abilities are not so used, the old evil influence will enter in, reënforsed, bringing "seven other spirits more wicked than itself" and "the last state is worse than the first." The unused life will become the abused life.

A man may find that he is enslaved by passions and impulses that blind his judgment, destroy his happiness, and bring harm to others. He seems to be unable to control either his thoughts or his deeds. It even appears as though he were under the spell of an "evil spirit"; he behaves, as we still say, "like one possessed." Modern psychology has fully demonstrated the actuality of the forces in man which prevent the attainment of a unified personality, making his name "legion," and which account for the loss of moral responsibility. They seem to have their origin in the mysterious reservoir of the sub-conscious, and are possibly the survival of racial instincts and experiences from a lower stage in human evolution. By a resolute effort one may succeed in holding them in check, like a mutinous crew, or they may be driven out temporarily. But they will come back, perhaps with greater intensity, unless their grip is broken by the superior power of a new interest and a new conviction. They can be mastered only

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by the substitution of a strong motive, by devotion to some worthy aim, which will enlist and properly coördinate all of one's energies. The house is then occupied by its rightful owner, and its inhabitant is at peace.

Ignorance is an evil which every man desires to drive out. Knowledge confers power, and in a trained mind there is strength. But as ignorance is expelled, purpose and determination must steadily grow, that knowledge and skill may be employed for some serviceable end. Otherwise, the chief value of education will be lost. When ability and training are seized by low desire, used only for selfish advantage and social exploitation, the injury that is done to the man himself as well as to society is greater than the harm that resulted from the limitations of his former ignorance. The last state is worse than the first.

Poverty is an evil to be overcome. To strive to be released from it is a natural ambition, and to remove its handicap entirely from every human life is one of the great goals of enlightened effort today. But the danger is always present that with the release from poverty, possessions and wealth will not be used in beneficial ways. A man may receive a large inheritance, or he may amass wealth by success in his business undertakings. In either case he is liberated from poverty. But what use will he make of his riches? Will he use them simply to gain more? Live in idleness and reckless indulgence? Will he

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permit a spirit of arrogance and a disregard for others to grow and to rule his behavior? Or will he feel a deeper sense of stewardship, and seek to employ his resources in some form of public benefit? Unless he is actuated by a spirit of consideration and responsibility, it cannot be doubted that his last state is worse than the first.

An urgent task, demanding the highest intelligence and devotion of men, is the abolition of war and the perfecting of organization for the peaceable settlement of international conflicts. The problem centers in this: What spirit shall control the nations in their dealings with each other? Taught by the terrible experiences of the great War, men and women in every land are striving to drive out the old, evil spirit of strife. There are some present, encouraging indications that it has been partially expelled. But will it later return, when the lesson of our recent sufferings may be forgotten? If it does, it will bring reënforcement for destruction more powerful than it ever had.

Sir Alfred Ewing, formerly Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and an eminent scientist, has described this. Speaking of the discoveries and inventions which have so largely contributed to man's comfort and progress, he points out that these same discoveries contain a "monstrous potentiality of ruin." "With added experience and further malignant ingenuity, the weapons of a future war will be more than ever deadly, more than ever indiscriminate, and the peril to civilization will be infinitely in-

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creased." When the great War came, he says: "I saw that the wealth of products and ideas with which the engineer had enriched mankind might be prostituted to ignoble causes. In our diligent cultivation of these arts . . . progress in them has far outstripped the ethical progress of the race." And he makes the plea for "a spiritual awakening," for "a growth of sanity as will prevent the gross misuse of his (the engineer's) good gifts."

Our house has been swept and, we hope, purified, by the lives of men who made the utmost sacrifice, who "gave their tomorrow for our today." Shall it be reëntered by the unclean spirit of conflict, made unfit for human habitation by the misuse of the "wealth of products and ideas" which modern science has supplied? Or have we sufficiently advanced in ethical progress, in the growth of sanity, so that it may become the abode of the spirit of Christ?

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

"WHEN A MAN FINDS HIMSELF"

And he said, A certain man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

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But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Luke 15:11-32.

This parable, which is so rich in content, may be called the story of a deepening experience. The younger of two sons of a wealthy father felt that he should no longer wait

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for his expected inheritance, and upon asking for his portion his father readily gave it to him. He had apparently a natural desire to see more of the world and of life, so taking the ample means which he now possessed, he set out in search of adventure. But the use that he made of his opportunity proved to be neither profitable nor pleasant. He was an easy mark for the schemer who sought to get his money, and he was soon parted from it. In his eagerness to see life he mistook disease for health, and the consequences were disastrous. He had to learn in a hard school where the fees were heavy, and there was no softening of the discipline.

Finally, it is said, "he came to himself." With his inheritance gone, and compelled to earn a precarious livelihood, he was ready at last to look at the facts frankly. He realized that the misfortunes which had overtaken him were not due to circumstances. They were the result of his own foolish acts. His plight was not to be explained by saying that he had dared to go counter to ordinary standards of conduct. The laws that had been violated were inherent in his own nature. He had looked at life from a wrong viewpoint. The satisfactions he had sought had not yielded life; they had impoverished it. His course was changed through a truer knowledge of himself.

To come to an accurate knowledge of one's self is, in its full implications, the whole aim of life. Socrates rightly insisted that the first step toward wisdom was: "Know

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thyself." To educate means, according to the common definition, "to draw out" one's latent capacities and powers. A college has been described by a prominent educator as, "an organized opportunity for self-development." Provision can be made for acquiring knowledge; stimulation can be given by competent teaching and personal contacts. But the process of education is essentially that of self-discovery and the utilization of one's own powers. Unless this stage is reached, all else is external and inadequate.

Here is a student who is not making satisfactory progress. He gives the impression of having ability, which is borne out by the more precise tests of psychology. He is not using his talents, and the reason is that he has not "come to himself." The difficulty may be in some physical handicap or other circumstance. He may not be sufficiently aware of what he is capable of doing. He may need to change his entire mental outlook. Whatever the limitation, the all important thing is to find and to release the inner resources that are actually there.

A famous Dean who had long and unusual influence with students once summed up what he constantly sought to do. He referred to the opinion, sometimes held, that teaching may become monotonous "to a pedagogue and his victim." "But," he said, "when the aim is by innate sympathy and skill, by one means or another, to get into the brain of a student, to make oneself sufficiently a part

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of it to be able to explore it, to find and to follow an elusive shadow that shuts in the mind from seeing clearly what it is, or must be made, desirous of seeing, and finally, by some felicitous stroke, to seize the substance of that shadow, remove it and let in the full light of understanding—when it is conducted as a voyage of discovery into the enchanting realms of nascent thought and feeling, it takes on an aspect than which nothing can be more engaging. Such voyages of discovery vary in their delights and surprises with every student and are new every day.”¹

There is a still further consequence of a knowledge of self. In the parable, when the young man “came to himself” he thereupon arose and “came to his father.” He then understood his father as he had not done before, and thenceforth entered into a new relation with him. The deepening experience which enabled the son to discover the nature and the laws of his own life, led him also to know the character and affection of the father, who did not treat him as a renegade, but who saw him “when he was yet a great way off.”

This parable was told by Jesus to illustrate the character of God, and the way men may learn to know Him. It was Jesus’ teaching that God is a Father who freely bestows upon men His bounty, upon Whose affection and

¹ J. Howard Van Amringe, Dean of Columbia College, 1894-1910, from an address printed in the *Columbia University Quarterly*, Supplement, June, 1909, p. 26.

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forgiveness men may depend. With His deep insight into life, Jesus here teaches this striking truth, that the sure path to a knowledge of God is through a right understanding of self, through a clear perception of the spiritual forces that sustain and liberate life. Whoever fully knows himself will know God, for it is "in Him that we live and move and have our being." By whatever experience "the elusive shadows" that hinder life are discovered and removed, to "come to one's self" is to live in the glad freedom of the sons of God.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT THE REWARD OF TOIL

But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Luke 17:7-10.

Whenever Jesus related a parable, His one purpose was, as we have seen, to illustrate a principle.¹ He selected situations and practices which He described as they actually were or as might easily be imagined; but it is characteristic of His insight that He frequently made the circumstances express a lesson strikingly different from that which they ordinarily suggested. He does so in this parable. His object here was neither to condone the conduct of an unfeeling master, nor to advocate the weak sub-

¹ Compare *The Unjust Steward*, pp. 126-131.

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mission of an overtaxed servant. His aim was to make plain and to emphasize the principle, that as His followers had as their standard of living the ideal of service, they were never to feel that they were rendering too much. This was the new standard of the Kingdom which He exemplified in His own life, for He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister,² and all who caught His spirit were to be actuated by the same motive. By pointing to the man who was commanded to perform a task beyond that of his day's work, He set forth a whole philosophy of life, a new conception of living. In this paradoxical parable, He declared that the right attitude is not a resentful, reluctant acceptance of tasks that cannot be escaped, but the willingness at all times to do the utmost of which one is capable.

It is by this motive that every demand which life makes upon us is transformed into a larger opportunity for serviceable achievement. It releases the deepest springs of human action, and inspires the highest use of every faculty. It changes drudgery into delight, and makes for the invaluable quality of individual initiative. It causes a man not to be satisfied with doing as little as possible, or only as much as he is compelled, but to strive constantly to perfect his work and to contribute all within his power.

In education it is always important to ascertain the student's attitude, both toward his work and toward life

² Mark 10:45.

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generally. Is he content merely to do the minimum requirement in order to get credit for the course and so remain in college? Or is he willing to do more than the assignment, because his aim is to master the subject which he is studying and to carry on independently his own investigations? When does he feel that he has done enough? What is his attitude toward his fellow students and as a member of the community? To get the most and contribute the least? Or does he recognize the obligation to be a producer of the best, as well as a consumer? It is possible, if one is clever and lucky, to get by, perhaps, without very much exertion. If so, there is nothing that fails like success. It was a discerning teacher who told his class "not to let getting a degree interfere with getting an education." For education necessarily implies the ability to act upon one's own initiative, the willingness to go beyond that which is specified, and the persistent desire to attain the excellent.

In the realm of science, the principle of the parable is constantly illustrated. No one who has caught the spirit of modern scientific research ever feels he is doing too much. Whether the search is to detect the cause of a baffling disease, to find how to release the enormous force in the atom, to compute the distance of the stars, or to comprehend the origin of life, there is always so much more to be learned, even epoch-making discoveries falling far short of complete solution, that no effort or sacri-

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fice to make some contribution to knowledge is ever considered to be too great. An Edison in his laboratory will carefully regulate each hour of his day and night so as to give every ounce of his remarkable energy. A Carrel or a Mayo will make his experiments at whatever personal cost, to overcome the diseases from which men suffer. In devotion to this ideal of doing all, some have not held back from paying the price with their lives.

Like the master of the house, life does speak to us with the voice of authority. It makes upon us its insistent demands. We are all confronted with the necessity of earning a livelihood. Much is required of us simply to maintain ourselves. "It takes a lot of running to stand still." What shall be our attitude and response to these imperious duties? Shall we perform them grudgingly, seeking for some fortunate circumstance which will enable us to escape? Shall we think of our work, whatever it may be, as simply a part of a harsh competitive system whereby we may succeed in amassing wealth and controlling others so that we may issue our command to them: "Come, gird up thyself and serve me"? It is Christ's teaching that work is to be regarded neither as something to be avoided nor as the means for selfish advancement. It is to be utilized to the fullest extent for ministering to human welfare. All activity is to be dominated by the desire to render one's best. When this end is sought, the demands of life become privileges and the attempts of men to exploit are done

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away. There is no limit to what may be achieved, and in view of the magnitude of the undertaking, no one who does all in his power can ever feel that he is doing too much.

Said Edward Burne-Jones: "The utmost of one's best for the highest service—this is the Catholic faith without which there is no salvation."

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THE BIBLE—THE NEED OF KNOWING IT ARIGHT

The remark is often made that the Bible is not read and known as it used to be. We do not, however, have to look back to "the good old days" which, it is sometimes found upon investigation, "never were." There is sufficient evidence in the present to show at least the need that the Bible should be known more fully and accurately than it now is. And from whatever angle of interest we may view the matter, this lack of an adequate knowledge of the Bible is a serious limitation. When the late James Bryce, our most friendly and discriminating critic, retired as British Ambassador, he said that one of the notable changes he had observed during his residence in America was a decline in familiarity with the Bible. "Looking at it," he commented, "only from the educational side, the loss of a knowledge of the Bible, and all that the Bible means, would be incalculable to the life of the country."

An understanding and appreciation of English literature involves of necessity an intimate acquaintance with the Bible. The growth of our language and of the standards of excellence in its usage, have been profoundly influenced by it, from the days of Piers the Plowman, of

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Shakespeare and of Milton, down to our time. The King James Version, unsurpassed for beauty and loftiness of diction, has had a molding effect both upon popular speech and classic writings. Everyone who is capable of using the English language with skill and distinction, whether author or orator, is directly indebted to this translation.

Regarded, therefore, "only from the educational side," a deficiency in first-hand knowledge of the Bible is no slight handicap. A well known professor in a large university relates that he once asked his class in the study of Shakespeare, what was meant by a reference to Golgotha. To which, after some hesitation, the reply was made: "It was the name of the giant whom David slew with a stone." The confusion due to a current issue seems to have been responsible for the answer of the girl who, when asked about the Commandments, said she believed the eighteenth "had something to do with prohibition." But a far greater limitation than the inability to identify allusions, is the loss of contact with a source of power for lucidity of expression and for quickening the creative imagination. When Lincoln was asked to state for the Congressional Record what had been his education, he replied in one word, "defective." He had attended an impoverished school for less than six months. But he was able to write the Second Inaugural Speech and the Gettysburg Address largely because he was steeped in the language of the

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Bible. One of his biographers says that it also had the effect of "liberating his moral imagination."

Another aspect, doubtless in the mind of Lord Bryce when he made his comment, is the importance of the Bible for the cause of democracy. Beginning with the deliverance of a group of slaves from oppression in Egypt, continued in the vigorous opposition of the prophets to the despotism of kings and the exploitation of landowners, to Jesus' teaching of the infinite worth of every human life, the Bible makes plain the contribution of religion to the ideas and the principles upon which democracy is founded. At Sinai, where the beginnings were made to build up society on law, the principles then formulated were seen to have a validity higher than human convention; yet all the provisions of the law were referred to the vote of the people, that obedience might follow from intelligent and willing support.¹ Judges were to be selected from all the people for their wisdom and probity.² Rulers could claim no immunity by a falsely called "divine right"; no more scathing indictment of monarchs can be found than in the book of Samuel.³ They were always to be held amenable to law and were to be the servants of the people.⁴ The prophets were the champions of social justice, in which they saw the fulfillment of the divine will.⁵ And

¹ Exodus 24:7. Compare also the establishment of the Law in the same manner after the Exile, Nehemiah 8.

² Exodus 18:21 ff.

³ I Samuel 8:10 ff.

⁴ I Kings 12:1-7.

⁵ Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah.

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in the conception of the ideal society that is to come, law, written not on tables of stone but in the heart, is to be the expression of man's free spirit.⁶ Jesus wisely gave no specific directions as to the organization of government or of society, but He instilled principles and ideals which, working ceaselessly as the leaven, would in the end bring the fullest measure of life, liberty and happiness.

It is no wonder that Huxley, who opposed an interpretation of the Bible that made it an obstacle to science, should have called it "the most democratic book in the world," and advocated its retention in the public schools of England. Immanuel Kant made the statement: "The rise of the Bible as the people's book is the greatest blessing the human race has ever experienced." In our day, when democracy is widely discredited because of its failures, when it is confronted by enormous, untried tasks, should not all who would not see it perish, who still believe that "the cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy," have the enlightenment and the guidance which a right knowledge of the Bible affords?

Further, we need a correct and adequate understanding of the Bible to clarify our thinking in regard to the relation of its teachings to the discoveries of science. There are many people, young and old, who are confused in their religious outlook and who have a wrong notion of what science implies, because they do not rightly know the

⁶ Jeremiah 31:31 ff.

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Bible. In their minds, biblical teaching and the findings of science are arrayed against each other. One or the other has to be rejected and whichever the decision, the result is harmful. In three of our states, the outstanding scientific theory of modern times cannot legally be taught, and textbooks which explain it are barred, because of the assumption that the revelation of the Bible contradicts it. This pitiable and unnecessary situation recalls the remark of Artemus Ward: "It ain't people's ignorance that does harm: its their knowing so many things that ain't so." Individuals may protest and learned societies may pass resolutions, but what they accomplish is doubtful. The only solution is to go to the root of the matter. The Bible must be rightly known. Let religious leaders, educators, and scientists too, make it their business to promote a comprehension of the Bible according to proper methods of interpretation, and the artificial antagonism will disappear, to the benefit of both religion and science.

The primary reason for a thorough knowledge of the Bible is, of course, because it is essential for our religious life. The Bible is an original source book showing how men have learned increasingly to know God in actual developing experience. Mr. Edison has stated that when he seeks to investigate any subject in his field, he begins by acquainting himself with what has already been learned. This equips him with the best available information, and he can then go on to make his own discoveries. Without

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knowing the Bible, one deprives himself in religion of like aid. He puts himself in the position of one who attempts to master science without knowing the achievements of Archimedes, or Galileo, or Newton, or Faraday. He is restricted by imperfect knowledge, he is in danger of making mistakes which might be avoided, and his own efforts will in all probability be lacking in originality. The Bible is not a closed book. It enables us to know what has been gained in the past so that we can profit by it. But it also points us to the future. It shows us great areas of achievement and discovery yet to be entered. It sets before us standards and ideals and a goal of living still to be attained. By establishing his work on the foundation that has been laid, everyone is bidden to go on, to make his own discoveries, that he may possess the greater things that God has in store.

From whatever side we view the Bible, the necessity to know it, and to know it aright, is apparent—because of its literary worth, because of its importance for democracy, because of its clarifying effect upon our thinking as to science, and because of its indispensable place in our religious life. When the Bible is studied by methods which liberate its truth, it will be found as Lowell described it, a book “grand with life from cover to cover.”

THE BIBLE—HOW TO KNOW IT

In the preceding address, the present need of knowing the Bible was discussed from a variety of viewpoints, and it was also pointed out that this need can be met by an improved and a more accurate method in the study of the Bible. By studying it in the right way, the confusion which beclouds our understanding will disappear. The Bible will be seen in a new light, and "more light will break forth from it."

(1) The first step that is necessary in order to know the Bible is to have an unbiased, persistent desire to find out the facts. Just as in the study of any other subject, we must be possessed with the passion to know the truth, with a willingness to follow wherever it leads us. That is, we are to rid our minds of all prejudice and preconceived notions, particularly of the disposition to make the Bible support some view, personal, theological, or of any sort, which we hold in advance. The Bible cannot be known aright if we fall into the common practice of selecting from it only those verses or passages which we can construe to prove a position which we wish to justify. Our one aim must be to discover what it is that the Bible actually contains. In our personal interest, our attitude

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must be like that expressed by President Lincoln when a visitor said to him during the Civil War, "I hope, sir, that God is on our side." "I am not concerned with that," was Lincoln's answer, "what I want to know is, are we on God's?"

It is this object, impartially to know the facts and to be guided by them, which is characteristic of the present-day, historical study of the Bible. As a consequence of such study, we may sometimes be required to make a readjustment in our thinking. New knowledge gained will lead to fresh interpretations of old scenes and events. But in proportion as the facts are rigorously sought and followed, so will the results be wholly constructive and immensely enlightening.

An initial fact, probably familiar to everybody, is that the Bible is not a single book, but a collection of books; it is a selected library. Neither were these books written all at one time nor in the same way, but as the Bible indicates, "at sundry times, and in divers manners."¹ They were composed in the course of many centuries, and reflect various stages of civilization, culture, and religious progress. Careful examination shows that some of the writings are preserved only in part, incorporated in other books, and that practically every book bears the marks of revision and additions by compilers and editors who lived in a later age than the original authors. The books also exhibit a

¹ Epistle to the Hebrews 1:1.

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wide variety of literary form, so that we have songs, poems, stories, legal codes, annals, and one superb drama. This fact makes the Bible of unequaled value as literature, and needs, as we shall see, to be taken into account in the interpretation of each book. Gradually all the books composing the Old Testament were collected and arranged, in due time the writings of the New Testament were added, and we have the Bible as it is today.²

(2) The next step is to examine these books one after another, preferably in the chronological order in which they were written. Our search is here to ascertain in the case of each book, when was it written, and by whom? Amid what circumstances? What were the chief events of the time, the political issues, social customs, the religious beliefs and practices? Knowledge of these facts will give us an acquaintance with the age in which the writers lived, and enable us better to comprehend what they did and taught.

The importance of knowing the historical background may be made clear by an illustration. Supposing one were to read in some later century the Gettysburg Address. If the United States were to him scarcely more than a name, if he had no knowledge of the issues then at stake, and no familiarity with the life of Lincoln, he would, probably, be aware of the beauty of its phrases and the force of its appeal. But his appreciation would be increased a thou-

² Compare *Knowing the Bible*, Raymond C. Knox, Chapters I and II.

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sandfold if he investigated the history of the United States, knew the issues involved at the time, and was acquainted with the principal facts in the life of Lincoln. So is it in the study of each book of the Bible, whether it is a legal code of Moses, or a letter of Paul, or the sayings of Jesus.

(3) A third aim is to make sure that we correctly understand the literary form of each writing. Whenever we wish to know the ideas and convictions of any author, it is always necessary to consider the way in which he expressed them. For truth can be taught in many forms. A poem may be true, as may an allegory, or a novel, or a drama, though no one of them is a scientific or historical statement of truth and was not so intended. When Jesus sought to teach a certain truth as to what constitutes a neighbor, He did not recite history or relate an exact biography. Such was not His purpose. He taught, in the form of a story, a matchless parable. But if we believe in the spirit of neighborliness which it illustrates, we say the parable is true.

The question is frequently asked, should the Bible be accepted literally? By which is usually meant, is it to be taken in every verse and line as a precise statement of historical or scientific fact? This is the method of interpretation commonly called "literalism." The defect in it is that it is not really literal. It ignores the fact that the truths taught in the Bible are expressed in "divers manners," and attempts instead to compress them all in one

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manner. The result is that the truth may often be missed or misunderstood. The narratives of Genesis are not science, but they teach in the form of story, highly valuable truths. The book of Jonah is not history, but it teaches, in the form of a parable, a truth that is closely akin to Jesus' teaching. The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings contain valuable historical and biographical records, but they were originally classified among the prophetic writings, which indicates that their primary purpose was to teach moral and religious lessons. To take into account the many different kinds of literature which we find in the Bible, and to interpret each book according to the literary form which the author used in presenting his truth (we would call this a "literal" interpretation), is a way of studying the Bible which will remove much confusion and yield a true understanding of its contents.

(4) Finally, we seek to trace throughout the entire Bible the evidence of spiritual and moral growth. The books of this library, not being written all at one time, are not all on the same level. The childlike conceptions of the universe in the stories of Genesis are entirely outgrown in the magnificent grasp of the Second Isaiah,³ who lived many centuries later. The book of Esther does not teach the lofty truth of Jesus that enemies are to be forgiven and loved. "Bit by bit the light came like the glimmering dawn."

³ Isaiah 40.

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How could it be otherwise? This is the only method by which man has ever learned or ever can learn; gradually, through enlarging experience. To overlook the constant growth that took place in the centuries of history represented by the many books of the Bible, is to fail to recognize one of its plainest and most important facts, and can lead only to perplexity; it may be to the rejection of all the truth that the Bible contains. But to see the knowledge of God that was gained in each age, and then to trace how it steadily grew, is to come to the highest knowledge of Him which we have in Christ.

I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
That help he needed once, and needs no more,
Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:
For he hath new needs and new helps to these.
This imports solely man should mount on each
New height in view: the help whereby he mounts,
The ladder rung his foot has left, may fall,
Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
Man apprehends Him newly at each stage,
Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done;
And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.

When we seek solely the facts, in readiness to follow their leading, when we give heed to the literary forms in which the writers expressed their truths, when we see the continual growth extending through all the books, we are then in a position to know and to appreciate the Bible.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Is the Bible inspired? This is the question which is at the center of interest in any consideration of the Bible, and much depends upon the answer that is given to it. Have the discoveries of science made known to us such a totally different conception of the universe and of man as compared with the descriptions which we find in the Bible, that people who would keep abreast in their thinking with our present outlook cannot honestly believe that it is the inspired Word of God? Does the modern study of the Bible, which applies to it the same methods employed in the investigation of other literature, showing its complex origin, varied literary forms, and gradual growth, undermine the foundation for faith in its divine revelation?

That the Bible is genuinely inspired is a deep-rooted conviction. It was held to be true of the Old Testament when the several collections of which it is composed were set apart and designated as sacred writings. This belief in the Old Testament became the natural and valued inheritance of Christian communities, who in due time added the writings of the New Testament of whose inspiration they felt even more confident. In the inspired nature of the Bible was seen its distinctive character, which

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made its books different from other literature, and which gave to them a divine authority. It had, therefore, a higher than human origin; it came directly from God and was to be so recognized. This faith in the Bible which men felt, rested not only on the testimony of the past, but also upon their own experience. For they gained from it guidance as to how to live, a renewal of strength to meet temptation and hardship, and the assurance of a larger life hereafter.

But when the Bible is called inspired, what is meant by it? It is inspired how, and for what reason? The belief may be based upon reality, but it may also be that that reality is not adequately understood or correctly explained. It is possible that those who either doubt or affirm its inspiration may have a too limited idea as to what it signifies or what it consists of. They may think only of some theory or attempted explanation which has long been accepted, but which is not the same thing as the reality itself. That the sun gives forth heat and light is an undoubted fact. Men try to explain it, to know the why and the how of its radiant energy, but the theories they advance are not to be confused with the sun itself. Theories change from age to age; those found inadequate give way to explanations that are more satisfactory, because they better account for the facts. So is it with regard to conceptions of inspiration, and to theological interpretations generally. They are the attempts to explain the abiding realities of religion

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in the light of the knowledge that men in any given age possess. They vary as increasing knowledge enables us to gain an ever better understanding of the ultimate mystery.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day, and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
For Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

The theory of inspiration which held sway for centuries, and which still lingers in the minds of men, is, that the Bible is inspired because it was directly communicated, even dictated, by God Himself to men whom He chose for that purpose. It could not be the work of men who, by using their intelligence and spiritual faculties, gained a knowledge of truth and expressed their convictions. If such were the case, it is claimed, the Bible would be subject to error and not fully to be trusted. In extreme form, the doctrine is that the sacred writers were simply "the passive instrument, or amanuensis, of the Divine Spirit."¹ The Talmud declared that the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Bible, were divinely dictated to Moses; and what was believed as to the Law was extended in the Christian era to include all the books.

But is this the correct and wholly satisfactory explanation? Is it supported by the facts? Does it accord with what the Bible itself actually states as to how it was written? If it does not, then we must seek a better explanation.

¹ *Dictionary of the Bible*, James Hastings, editor, Vol. I, p. 296.

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tion, which will in no wise disturb the truth that is there, but it will enable us more fully to comprehend it.

We cannot but wonder that inspiration was ever thought to consist in dictation, direct or in any modified form. Any reference to experience shows that inspiration and dictation are practically opposites. The writer recalls a course in philosophy conducted by an instructor who was competent in knowledge, but who had not at the time acquired skill in imparting it. As he was eager that his students should know precisely what philosophy was, he laboriously dictated his definition of it. The class wrote it down dutifully, word for word as given, but it is to be confessed, at least in one instance, with little active use of the intelligence. The definition was long and involved, and it did not seem to convey any clear understanding of the meaning of philosophy. It was only so many words. When the day for a quiz came, no great foresight or interest was needed to prepare for it by learning the definition. The question was the first on the paper, the answer was written, as dictated, a high mark was awarded; but what philosophy was all about was promptly forgotten. Reflection upon this incident would seem to justify the belief that God, the great Teacher of mankind, is too wise ever to dictate, but that He truly inspires men by stimulating and encouraging them to use their minds and to gain knowledge in experience.

When we examine the Bible itself, we discover that this

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is the clue to an understanding of how and why men feel it to be truly inspired. It is inspired because it is inspiring. It stimulates both the mind and the conscience to act. It gives new insight into daily experience, and unveils a vision of something greater. The original meaning of the verb "to inspire" is "to breathe into." Probably in early days this was thought of as an actual impartation of breath, since breath was then identified with spirit. But even so, this was only a first attempt to explain an evident fact. Men who sincerely sought to live in fellowship with God, in the light that was given them according to the age, did, somehow, exhibit a new spirit. To use further the illustration of the class room and the laboratory, there are teachers who in some way succeed—but not by dictation—to impart a new spirit into those who have association with them. Whoever has had contact with them never ceases to feel his indebtedness. There is an influence in their words and their unconscious actions which in some way—just how is still a mystery—is communicated; and the effect is to arouse new effort, mental and moral, in others, who then have the feeling of a fresh energy released within themselves.

The books of the Bible were written in the same manner as other books.² The authors used sources of information which they from time to time specify, and they derived their truth by scrutinizing and participating in the life of

² Compare the preceding chapters on the Bible.

their day. Luke explicitly declares in the preface to his Gospel, that he had investigated what others had written, consulted eyewitnesses, and set down in orderly fashion his conclusions.³ He wrote, that is, as a trained historian always does. But as we read the books of the Bible, if we use our minds and are at all responsive, we are aware within ourselves of the stimulating spirit which the words communicate. This was so strongly felt by those who heard Jesus that they said his words were "life," and they have the same effect when they are read today. This is the inspiration of the Bible, as we can best understand it, verifiable in life now as it has been verified in former generations.

Coleridge, in a well known passage, wrote that he believed in the inspiration of the Bible because, he said, its words "find me at greater depths of my being."⁴ He was on the right track. The Bible enables us to know ourselves in the deep places of living. But it does more. In finding ourselves we come to knowledge of God in Whom we live, and Who is a quickening spirit. Paul felt the contrast strongly between a faulty reading of the Bible and a full understanding of it when he wrote, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."⁵

³ Luke 1:1.

⁴ *Confession of an Inquiring Spirit*, Samuel T. Coleridge, Complete works, Vol. V., Letter II, p. 582.

⁵ II Corinthians 3:6.

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WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

The life of Jesus was devoted to one great aim. His sole and constant purpose was to establish on earth the Kingdom of God. In reading the record of His life, especially the first three gospels, we cannot fail to be impressed with the singleness of His purpose to teach men of the Kingdom and to bid them prepare for it. Before undertaking His public work, He withdrew to the wilderness to think through His task of establishing the Kingdom, and beneath the symbolic description of the temptation scene we can see His resolve not to compromise His convictions with any suggested offer of security or of temporal power.¹ The Kingdom was the theme of which He first spoke when He went forth to preach, after John the Baptist had been put in prison for his preaching concerning it;² and to proclaim the Kingdom was the distinctive mission for which He declared He was sent.³ Every parable He told was to illustrate some aspect, as is usually indicated by His saying, "the Kingdom is like unto" the man, or the incident, then described. By varied and concrete questions and examples, He sought to stimulate men to think about the Kingdom that their thoughts might be clarified, and

¹ Matthew 4:1-11.

² Mark 1:14-15.

³ Luke 4:43.

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that they might see the significance of its new principles for daily living.

It was likewise His object to make known the Kingdom as He mingled among men and rendered them aid. He ministered to the sick, gave sight to the blind, brought hope to the discouraged and the oppressed, for to bring such relief was in obedience to the spirit of the Kingdom, which was upon Him.⁴ He had an unfailing sympathy for the despised, the "sinners," the outcasts, and asserted that He found among them a response to His words which would lead to their entrance into the Kingdom.⁵

Because of what He taught and did to inaugurate the new order of the Kingdom, He incurred the opposition of those whose traditional beliefs and conventional practices He disturbed and offended. They criticized Him because as the Son of Man, a title which He applied to himself as the founder of the Kingdom, He assured men of forgiveness,⁶ ignored their rigid rules of Sabbath observance,⁷ and associated with people whom they regarded as unworthy to be recognized.⁸ He faced death upon the cross, which He might have avoided, because of His unflinching fidelity to this aim, and He saw in His death not defeat, but the assurance of victory.⁹

Jesus had known and reflected upon the Kingdom from youth. He found it in His study of the scriptures of His

⁴ Luke 4:18-19.

⁷ Matthew 12:1-8.

⁵ Luke 15:1-10; Matthew 21:31.

⁸ Mark 2:15-17; Matthew 9:10-13.

⁶ Matthew 9:1-6.

⁹ Matthew 26:21-29.

race. It was the constant and growing theme of the foremost writings; the aspiration and hope of the prophets; the inspiration of poetry and song; and was vividly portrayed in the symbolic imagery of the apocalypses. He saw the foundation upon which belief in the coming of the Kingdom was based, and the vitality of this trust in sustaining the people through many critical and tragic experiences. But He also perceived the limitations and defects in men's understanding of the Kingdom. It had been, and was in His time, conceived of as inseparable from national preëminence. It had not been wholly freed in men's thoughts from ambitions and dreams of triumph by force, and of worldly dominion. Its spiritual and universal character was not fully comprehended. Instead of a new way of life, it was commonly identified with the minute observance of the rites and prescriptions of the ancient Mosaic law. Its higher and far-reaching ethical standards were not clearly seen.

So to teach men the true nature of the Kingdom, to make plain to them the requirements which, as they were heeded, would actually realize upon earth this supreme ideal, was the task to which He consecrated His life. He would reveal the Kingdom apart from all nationalistic limitations; would lead men to think of it not in terms of earthly splendor, but as the highest spiritual goal of all mankind, which, as it was attained, would be the reign of God upon earth.

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This ideal of the Kingdom becomes, therefore, the purpose which Christ bids us serve. To qualify as His followers means primarily and essentially that, guided by His leadership, we are to have the Kingdom as our sole and constant aim. That this is to be the one task of all who bear His name, He made unmistakably clear. He selected His first disciples that they might learn of His aim through association with Him, and so rightly undertake the work that was committed to them. He affirmed that the readiness of any man to engage in it was the closest bond of fellowship with Him, stronger and deeper than the physical ties of his own family.¹⁰ To have men serve the Kingdom was more acceptable to Him than any acclaim or the verbal recognition of Him as Lord.¹¹ He classified men according to the contribution which they made to this end, however unconsciously, declaring that they who were not against Him were with Him, and those who gathered not, scattered.¹² We study the life of Christ now, that our thoughts may be clarified and our wills strengthened for this purpose. For we cannot serve Christ without devotion to His cause; and if we call Him Lord, we must do the things which He commands.¹³

It is important to recognize that the Kingdom, as Christ taught it, is the goal of life to be sought and achieved upon earth. It is an eternal Kingdom, for it is God's will for

¹⁰ Mark 3:32-35.

¹² Matthew 12:30.

¹¹ Matthew 7:21.

¹³ Luke 6:46.

WHAT IS IT

men. Its boundaries and laws are not confined to this world, and it gives us confidence in continued life and growth beyond the years here allotted to man. But we do not have to wait until this life is over before we can enter or serve the Kingdom. The place and the time for the Kingdom to be realized are here and now, as we know specifically from His prayer, which is also ours: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."¹⁴ The Kingdom is the purpose of life which we learn from the life of Christ. It is to enlist all our forces, direct our energies, and for it we are to make the utmost sacrifice.

¹⁴ Luke 11:2; Matthew 6:10.

THE NEED OF A NEW MIND

When Jesus decided that the time had come to carry out the purpose of His life to make known the Kingdom, He began His public work by speaking in the cities and villages of Galilee, not far from His home. In His first address, He spoke at once of the subject which He had at heart, saying: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the good news."¹ And this, it is said, was the subject of which He continued to speak wherever He went.²

The people who heard Him were generally familiar with the idea of the Kingdom, and many were keenly interested in it. There was a widespread expectation that it would soon, perhaps suddenly and miraculously, appear, and signs were sought which would herald its coming.³ Jesus' announcement was that this expectation and hope were at last to be realized. The time was fulfilled; the conditions were favorable; there was no need of further postponement because of external circumstances. But, Jesus declared, men must prepare for it. There was something

¹ Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:12-17. The term, Kingdom of heaven, used in Matthew has the same meaning as the Kingdom of God.

² Matthew 4:23.

³ Luke 17:20-21; Matthew 24:3.

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different that was demanded of them. The fact that they were in the presence of a new order of living, at the dawn of a day which would lead to a new age in history, necessitated certain changes in their outlook and conduct, that they might be qualified to enter into it. They were "to repent and believe the good news."

What did Jesus mean in naming these requirements? What did He mean by repent? Since repentance was, and is, the first necessity for entrance into the Kingdom, much depends upon a right understanding of what it signifies. As used by Jesus, and in its exact and literal definition, to repent means "to change one's mind for the better," to advance to a new and truer way of thinking, especially that different and more enlightened manner of thought which issues in changed and consistent conduct. The word contains no suggestion that as a demand it is limited in its application only to certain individuals or groups. It has no special reference to those whose lives have been dissolute and sinful, nor is repentance simply the feeling of regret for past misdeeds with the resolve not to repeat them. "To change one's mind for the better" which is to be indicated by corresponding conduct, was, as Jesus stipulated, equally the need of everybody.

The people, however, who were most impervious to this insistence of Jesus upon repentance, and who often resisted it, were those who complacently assumed that it did not apply to them at all. As may be seen from many instances

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in the gospels, He did not hesitate to point out that to repent was the conspicuous need of men of conventional morality. More frequently than of any others, He demanded it of the Pharisees, prominent and influential in their day, many of whom took it for granted that their lives were exemplary because they themselves conformed to the accepted standards, and scrupulously observed all the provisions and ceremonial specifications of the law. They needed a new mind because their minds were closed. They had no eagerness to learn. They could not see the import of the plain facts before their eyes. As He said to them on one occasion, they scanned the weather to read the signs in the sky, but they did not study the events of their day, that they might know the signs of the times.⁴ Because their minds were closed, they failed to understand Jesus and the new truth which He taught concerning the Kingdom. They criticized Him as a "new teacher," and condemned Him because of His freedom of action and of His association with the class of people whom He sought to help.⁵ They were not leaders of insight and of foresight; they were only "blind leaders of the blind."⁶ In their unreadiness to change their minds for the better, Jesus found the chief obstacle which prevented their entrance into the new era of the Kingdom. Their need was to repent.

The necessity for men to have a new mind was also evident elsewhere. He saw the social customs based upon

⁴ Matthew 16:1-3.

⁵ Mark 2:15-22.

⁶ Matthew 15:14.

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false distinctions, which hindered understanding and fellowship. He saw that the ancient law of Moses, instead of being the foundation of liberty, had been made a burden of regulation grievous to be borne.⁷ He saw that the spirit of mercy, which from of old religion was to inculcate, had been obscured by a perverted tradition that made void the Word of God.⁸ There was a false estimate of wealth, an inverted idea of greatness, an ignorance and a disregard of those who dwelt in foreign lands. Men must, therefore, "turn about" (that is, be converted), change their minds for the better and live accordingly, that the new order of the Kingdom, which was waiting only for men to conform to it, might be realized on earth.

That the Kingdom may come in our day, the first step to be taken is still to repent. In proportion as we are willing to change our minds for the better and endeavor to live consistently, so can we advance to that new and higher level of living which Christ sets before us as the goal. As in the time of Christ, the main hindrance is complacency, which causes us to be unaware of our limitations and of the need to repent. There is the ever present danger of having minds that are closed. His first and repeated announcement remains the same: the time is fulfilled; the conditions are ready; the Kingdom is at hand. Yet how persistent are the prejudices and the practices which restrict the fullness of life, obstruct sympathy

⁷ Luke 11:46.

⁸ Mark 7:8-13.

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and understanding among men, and which might be totally overcome if we were willing to rectify our way of thinking. Says the author of a widely read book: "If some . . . transformation could be produced in men's way of looking at themselves and their fellows, no inconsiderable part of the evils which now afflict society would vanish away, or remedy themselves automatically."⁹

Among the evils that have long afflicted society, the worst which threatens us is the evil of war. If war can now be forever abolished, it will mark the greatest advance in human history. It will banish the fear of enemies and of national disaster, eliminate the chief peril in commercial intercourse, release us from the crushing load of armaments—it will transform the face of the earth. Upon what does this achievement, which is at hand and in our power, depend? On this subject, one of the most experienced and competent authorities is Mr. Elihu Root. In foreign affairs, he says, "there is never a difference so great that it cannot be peaceably settled if approached in the right spirit. And there is never a difference so trifling that it may not be the occasion for war if approached in the wrong spirit." For "war results from a state of mind."¹⁰ What striking confirmation is this to the words of Christ! The Kingdom with its blessings of peace is at hand; therefore repent!

⁹ *The Mind in the Making*, by James Harvey Robinson, p. 3.

¹⁰ Address by Elihu Root in accepting the award of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, December 28, 1926.

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Saint Paul's summary was: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ." To have a mind essentially like His, is to comply with the first, indispensable requirement of the Kingdom.

THE NEED OF A NEW FAITH

In proclaiming that the Kingdom was immediately to be realized, Jesus bade men prepare for it in two ways. The first requisite was to repent, which, as we have seen, is primarily an act of the mind. It is to think anew, with the implication that conduct is to be brought up to the higher level of the thinking. The second requirement was also stated in His announcement: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the good news."¹

The gospel, or the good news, was in Jesus' teaching here and elsewhere, the coming of the Kingdom. The specific belief which Jesus asked of men was, therefore, to believe, or to have faith, that the Kingdom could and would be actually established on earth. What did He mean by belief or faith?

It is unmistakably plain from an examination of His sayings in regard to faith, that He never expected of men anything resembling in the remotest sense, credulity. Faith, as He employed it, is not to be defined as it is said to have been by a little boy in Sunday School, as "believing something which you know isn't true." Further,

¹ Mark 1:15.

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belief or faith was never used by Him in contrast with knowledge, nor did He mean by it, as it is sometimes characterized, a conviction that is held in the absence of proof. As He did not give to men any definitely formulated statement which they were to accept and repeat, faith cannot have the significance of a willingness to subscribe. Just as with repentance, He insisted upon faith because of its direct bearing upon conduct and life. As we can see illustrated everywhere, what a man genuinely believes always affects what he does. If one has a real faith in honesty, he will strive to be honest. If he has no faith in it, he may consider honesty to be a virtue; he may ordinarily be honest, since it is usually the "best policy." But it will not be a principle deeply rooted in his life, and he will be quite likely to depart from it when the pressure of circumstances becomes too strong. It is necessary to believe in education before one can be educated. Otherwise, one may be "exposed" to it; he may go through the process and perhaps acquire its symbols; but unless he persistently believes in its value and its possibility, he will not do his work with the thoroughness that is necessary to master knowledge and to develop the mind. If a nation believes in force, it will act accordingly and is to be reckoned with; but if it believes in fairness and the peaceful adjustment of all issues, it will be quite a different neighbor and can be so treated.

Thus because faith has this vital quality, invariably

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determining action, Jesus saw that it was indispensable to men for the service of the Kingdom. Belief in the good news of the Kingdom means to have such firm faith in its principles, standards and values, that we constantly strive for them. It is the motive power that fulfills the purpose which Christ showed.

Faith is also demanded for the realization of the Kingdom because it banishes fear. It has been said that in Jesus' teaching, faith is never opposed to knowledge or to inquiry. But it is always the opposite to fear. Here is the defect that lurks in some forms of doubt. Doubt which makes men aware of their limitations, dissatisfied with the inadequacy of their achievements and of what they know, may properly be said to arise from faith. Its awakening effect is from the positive, underlying belief in the more that can be gained and which is therefore to be sought. But the doubt of fear, which is the antithesis of faith, is another matter. Such doubt paralyzes effort by its timidity, despairs of search and effort because it deems them futile, as leading nowhere. Shakespeare understood this when he wrote: "Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt."

The belief that Jesus desired to awaken in men was the faith that dispels fear. His whole gospel may be summed up in the saying: "Fear not."² In bidding men strive for the Kingdom, He well knew the obstacles and dangers

² *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, by Ernest F. Scott, p. 106.

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they would have to overcome. The ideal was so exalted that they might consider it to be impossible. They might be afraid of that which was high. Loyalty to it, He knew, involved privation and sacrifice, and men might easily hesitate or turn back because of fear. But then they would lose the good that might be won. The needed faith in the Kingdom is the kind which, in the figure He gave, can remove mountains.

The third characteristic of the faith Jesus sought, is in its power to create. It is bound up with the ability to achieve the untried and the new. Herein is the real relation of faith to knowledge. Faith uses all that is known, and then confidently seeks to know more. It is not content with what has been done, but inspires with the vision of the greater thing possible. Faith is as Thomas Aquinas defined it, "courage of the spirit which projects itself forward, sure of finding the truth." Or, as described in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."³ The basis of all scientific investigation and discovery is faith, as its discerning leaders have recognized. New lands have been explored, institutions reared, enduring art and literature produced, by men who possessed a positive faith.

So shall the Kingdom come. It is not first seen and then believed in. We cannot first look for its outward signs, saying: "Lo, it is here, or there."⁴ It must be looked for

³ Hebrews 11:1.

⁴ Luke 17:20-21.

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within. It must be believed in first, and then it shall be seen. Justice and peace, good will and brotherhood, all that the Kingdom implies, are now only partially to be seen in the affairs of men. In some areas they seem almost entirely absent. But just as we believe in them, that they can be made supreme, so, according to our faith, shall it be unto us.

Because faith directly affects living, because it drives out fear, because it has in it the power to create, it was named by Jesus as the second requirement for entrance into the new order of the Kingdom.

Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given.
It is an affirmation and an act,
Which makes eternal truth be present fact.

THE NEED OF A NEW LIFE

Jesus' ideal of the Kingdom was primarily and essentially a new way of life. It was, in His teaching, not a place of perfection and bliss in another world, neither was it a utopian dream of an ideal future for this world. The Kingdom was to transform the life of men here upon earth into complete harmony with the will of God,¹ and it could be realized whenever they were willing to conform to its standards and laws.

To attain to this new order of living, men are to repent, for repentance is the new mind that leads to changed conduct. Faith is necessary, for it is the motive power of life, driving out fear and inspiring men to creative activity.

The test, therefore, of whether men actually possessed a new mind and a genuine faith was always to be found in the way they lived. This need for the confirming evidence of life, Jesus stressed repeatedly, and in the strongest terms. "Do men," He asked, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."² He

¹ Luke 11:2.

² Matthew 7:16-20.

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permitted no one to call Him Lord whose life was not in accord with his profession: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"³ He went further and declared: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."⁴ He told a striking parable of two sons, one of whom promised to do as his father directed him, but did not, while the other declined but afterwards changed his mind and did; and He asked, "which of the two did the will of his father?"⁵ The central teaching of the parable of the two men who built their houses, one upon a rock and the other upon sand, is contained in the statement "therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," builds his life upon the lasting foundation of consistent deeds; whereas he "that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not," foolishly ignores the real basis upon which life is to be reared.⁶ In the pictorial description of the final judgment determining the destiny of men, character, as it is revealed by action, is the one deciding consideration. There were those who, when they saw their fellow men in need, consistently helped them, and inasmuch as it was done unto the least, it had the worth, in the estimation of Jesus, of being done unto Him. Others had seen their fellows in similar distress,

³ Luke 6:46.

⁵ Matthew 21:28-31.

⁴ Matthew 7:21.

⁶ Matthew 7:24-27.

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but inasmuch as they had done nothing to relieve them, Jesus regarded their indifference as a neglected opportunity to do Him service.⁷ Here the judgment that is pronounced is not arbitrary or imposed from without. Each man is simply made aware of the quality of his life, according to what he has done or has not done, and he takes his place in the class in which he properly belongs.

There is nothing that would so clarify our religious thinking today, or so strengthen the influence which religion should exert, as the thorough recognition of this decisive test of living, which Jesus insisted must be met in order that men might enter the Kingdom. It calls for no unhealthy introspection of emotional states, nor is it involved in the intricacies of theological definition. It demands solely that we be honest with ourselves, be candid in the admission of fact, and that we see, as Christ did, the evidence of life and of deeds as the only acceptable proof that belief in Him is real.

This same test is applicable to groups and to organizations, as well as to individuals. A church may have noble traditions, its creed and doctrine may be founded upon the teaching of the past and loyally maintained in the present, its forms of worship may be beautiful and uplifting; but if we are to give heed to the example of Christ, are not deeds to be made the final proof of fidelity? Do its members exhibit the spirit of charity, sympathy, self-forgetting

⁷ Matthew 25:31-45.

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sacrifice and spontaneous helpfulness, such as Christ always reckoned as the true homage and service rendered unto Him? If not, faith is without works, and it is dead.

How different the history of Christianity might have been, how our "unhappy divisions" might have been avoided, if correctness of belief had not been so widely confused with complete intellectual assent to dogma, but had been found rather in conformity to the standard by which Christ measured it when He said, "by their fruits ye shall know them." How far greater would be the influence, the transforming power, of religion today, if we now clearly realized that loyalty to Christ and the recognition of His Lordship are to be shown primarily by conduct and life.

The Kingdom will appear in proportion as we demonstrate by the way we live that we do accept Christ as Lord. The obstacles that now hold back its realization will not be overcome by theories and arguments, but by men and women who, believing in the Kingdom, demonstrate by deeds that they have the ability to remove them. The barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding by which men are divided, the poverty that still handicaps the full development of life, a competitive system in commerce which in the end "cuts its own throat," the lack of unity and concord among the churches, the misuse of wealth, and a wrong standard of greatness, the still present possibility of war—these are some of the stubborn obstructions

NEED OF A NEW LIFE

which stand in the way of good will and fellowship among men and the full reign of God's Kingdom upon earth. We believe that the religion of Christ is not for the cultivation of a detached piety, but that it is for the purpose of combating every evil that restricts life, and for bringing all the activities of men under the sway of His spirit. In fellowship with Him, there is the source of spiritual strength necessary for performing these tasks. It is for those who bear His name to show by what they do that they know this fellowship. This will exhibit the reality of the power that proceeds from Him. Its up-building effect will then increasingly appear, and a new order of society, conforming ever more closely to the principles He taught, shall be established upon a foundation that shall endure.

It was Christ's teaching that the Kingdom does not first come with outward signs to which men can point.⁸ The place where it has its seat is within, in a new mind and a new faith. But it was not His teaching, as is the interpretation sometimes made, that His Kingdom is a spiritual dominion quite apart from the ordinary affairs of men and the organization of their social living. The Kingdom is to dominate the whole of life. Its presence within is to be manifested by acts that redeem and mold the external surroundings. He compared the Kingdom to the leaven that is hid in three measures of meal, but which

⁸ Luke 17:20-21.

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works ceaselessly to make meal into bread for the nourishment of men. It may be as small at the beginning as a grain of mustard seed, but it grows until its branches cover the earth.⁹

⁹ Matthew 13:31-33.

THE NEW STANDARD OF GREATNESS

One of the most striking and original of Jesus' sayings was his comment as to the true nature of greatness. He was speaking at the time to the men whom He had selected to train for His work, and it is obvious from the account that His view of greatness so completely reversed the common idea that they could scarcely comprehend Him. Two brothers in the group came to Him and asked that He grant their ambition to occupy the chief places by His side, when He should establish the full splendor of His Kingdom.¹ Jesus' reply to this request was: "Ye know not what ye ask." Instead of promising them positions of prominence, He inquired whether they were ready to endure with Him privation and hardship: "Can ye drink the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When they answered that they were able, He called His disciples about Him and said:

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be

¹ Mark 10:35-45. In the parallel account, Matthew 20:20-28, it is said that the mother came with her sons.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

This estimate of the real character of greatness is fundamental in His entire teaching. It supplies the key for an understanding of every one of His sayings and parables, and it is constantly illustrated in His own life. He neither desired, nor did He permit to be given Him, rank and authority such as men generally were eager to possess.² Instead of seeking eminence, He assisted the needy, the sick, and the poor, to the open rebuke of those who loved the chief seats in the synagogue and the salutations in the marketplace.³ He devoted Himself unstintingly to the service of men by endeavoring to free their minds, to inspire them with courage and hope, and by assuring them, irrespective of station, of their infinite worth in the sight of God. He came, as He said, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister."⁴ By word and by deed, He proclaimed that in the new order of the Kingdom, the sole measure of greatness was the contribution which each man makes to the welfare of his fellows.

Novel and even startling as was this standard when first announced by Jesus, it has steadily gained in acceptance. It is so inherently true that men have instinctively been attracted to it. There has been the growing perception that the greatest men in history are not the conquerors who have extended their domain by force and

² John 6:15.

³ Mark 12:38-39.

⁴ Mark 10:45.

STANDARD OF GREATNESS

exercised lordship, but the men who have rendered the most in some form of human service. In France, it is said, that by popular vote Pasteur has been acclaimed as greater than Napoleon. The man who saved life has become more highly esteemed than the world's foremost military genius. Whatever their race or creed, or the age in which they lived, men who brought benefit to mankind are now recognized to be among those who "gather" on the side of Christ, and to have a kinship of spirit with him.⁵ To serve has been the aim of the men who have saved us from disease, some exhibiting the devotion which He praised as highest by laying down their lives.⁶ It has guided the men and women who have labored courageously for social reform, and it has been present as an inciting motive in every field of scientific discovery and research.

What is now needed to realize the Kingdom is, that this ideal of service should inspire and direct all the efforts of men. It is the end to be sought in every occupation. Whoever would truly serve his fellow men must do so, not as a side issue when the day's work is over, but mainly in and through the work whereby he earns his bread and gets his wealth. For man's life cannot be divided into two compartments, getting and giving. There can be in life no "moral bimetalism." One cannot have the debased standard of selfish gain in his business eight or

⁵ Matthew 12:30.

⁶ John 15:13.

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ten hours of the day, and then hope to resume the sound standard of unselfish service in the margin of hours that remain. Wealth must be earned as well as bestowed by the same rule. The "eye" must be "single" if the whole body is to be full of light. It is not possible to serve God and mammon.

The danger is that the term service will be made trite and so lose much of its significance. As it is sometimes used, it seems to have merely the meaning of profitable efficiency. In professing the desire to serve, there is always the temptation to act with the ulterior aim of personal advantage. Or the ideal may be subscribed to without reflection, simply because it is popular and praised. But in the teaching of Christ, service is not of this thoughtless and superficial character. It is to be performed under all circumstances, and if the devotion is real there will be frequent occasion when personal comfort and profit must be sacrificed. To Christ it meant the cross, and He declared: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."⁷

The motive of service is a persistent good will, or love, which is far more than well-wishing or a romantic feeling. It is a positive force, the highest ethical and religious virtue, and to it Jesus looked to dissolve the differences that divide men, and to unite them in fellowship. When one is injured by another, he is not to think of retaliation, but of

⁷ Matthew 16:24.

STANDARD OF GREATNESS

the generous, forgiving act that can be done, prompted by the readiness to serve, so that the breach can be healed. Thus service is to be rendered not to friends only, but to enemies, and evil is not to be overcome with evil, but with good. Men are always to be actuated by the willingness to do more than custom or the ordinary idea of duty requires, for if their acts are so limited the supreme service may be withheld.

In this generous, overflowing service, Jesus saw the manifestation of the divine life. It was the living bond that joined men, not only with their fellows, but also in fellowship with God. For His nature is to give without measure, and by sharing in the same spirit and purpose, men would become the sons of their Father in heaven and perfect as He is perfect.⁸ Then is the Kingdom come with power.

⁸ Matthew 5:42-48.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM

Jesus called His message of the coming of the Kingdom, the gospel, that is, the good news. It was not to be a day of wrath visited upon men for their sin, but a day when men might learn the power of release from sin.¹ It was not to be a time for the infliction of punishment upon the many and the bestowal of everlasting reward upon the few, but the beginning of a new order of living, here on earth, which would bring its benefits and happiness to all mankind. Instead of the destruction or subjugation of enemies and the exaltation of a chosen nation above the rest, foes were to be reconciled, injustice and oppression to be done away, and by the new standard of greatness measured in service, men would live and work together in mutual helpfulness and peace.

That Jesus Himself knew the Kingdom to be the supreme good news for men, may be seen throughout His teaching and in all His acts. He taught the necessity of rigorous self-discipline and of unstinted sacrifice, but there was in Him no trace of the ascetic, and He never advocated a denial of the rightful needs of the

¹ Matthew 1:21.

THE GOOD NEWS

body as the way to cultivate the life of the spirit. Material possessions might become a serious obstacle to entrance into the Kingdom when they were wrongly sought and selfishly used, but the world with its abundance was God's gift to men, and when the ideals of the Kingdom were sought first, all other things would be added unto them.² Men noticed immediately the contrast between Him and John the Baptist, who came wearing strange garb and practiced fasting, while Jesus' manner of living was quite natural and normal.³ When they asked why He did not teach His disciples to fast, He replied that they could not when they were in His company, since it was like joining a wedding party; only when they were not with Him would they be sorrowful.⁴ He was no "pale Galilean, making the world gray with His breath." His devotion to His cause meant poverty and hardship; He had not a place to lay His head. For its sake He was finally crucified. But to do His Father's will was His source of strength, His meat and drink, and by His fidelity He changed the cross into the symbol of triumph. His sermon on the mount is rightly called the Beatitudes, for it reveals the secret whereby men may attain spiritual mastery over all circumstances, and enduring happiness and peace.

The Kingdom is the good news because it makes known to men the real purpose of life. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwelt in the

² Matthew 6:33.

³ Matthew 11:18-19.

⁴ Luke 5:33-35.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”⁵ It presents the highest conceivable goal for which to strive, the *summum bonum* of all human endeavor. It makes place for the use of all of one’s energies, and provides for the unfettered realization of the individual life. By the paradox of life’s profoundest law, “whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”⁶

It also points the way to the perfect adjustment and co-ordination of all human relationships, that is, to the establishment of an ideal society. And yet it is not a mere counsel of perfection, a dream so lofty and visionary that men find it impossible to consider it as intended for this world, or at least think of its fulfillment only in some far distant age. The Kingdom can be realized; it is even at hand. The requirements for entering into the Kingdom, men have it in their power to meet, at any time, whenever they will.

By the willingness to repent, to advance to a new way of thinking, men’s minds are liberated from the bondage of prejudice, from antiquated tradition and custom, and from a restricted view of life. They become capable of constantly growing in the knowledge of the truth which makes men free.⁷ By a new faith, they are enabled to overcome the crippling limitations of fear, and to have the courage and confidence to strive for the Kingdom with the

⁵ Isaiah 9:2.

⁶ Matthew 16:25.

⁷ John 8:32.

THE GOOD NEWS

power to create. The presence of a new mind and an energizing faith are invariably shown by a new way of living, which exerts its transforming effects upon all outward and material surroundings. The distinctive characteristic of this new life is service to human welfare, which is the true test of greatness. *Concisely stated, the "good life" of the Kingdom is to be guided by intelligence, inspired by faith, and devoted to service.* Wherever there is today this manner of living, so founded and expressed, there the Kingdom is, to that extent, realized. It spreads and becomes increasingly visible as lives of this character are multiplied.

Men seek to know God. To know Him in spirit and in truth is the ultimate quest of the mind and heart. Christ reveals Him in the Kingdom. Without an understanding of the Kingdom, and devotion to it, men have never been able adequately to know God, nor will they ever be able. But by consecration to this aim, we come into His living presence. By sharing His purpose, we enter into closest fellowship and union with Him, and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. For the Kingdom is the spirit of God, in the minds and hearts and lives of men.

Jesus had faith that as men perceived the real nature of the Kingdom as the superlative good and goal of life, they would willingly and gladly seek it. He expressed this faith in two parables, saying:

The Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field;

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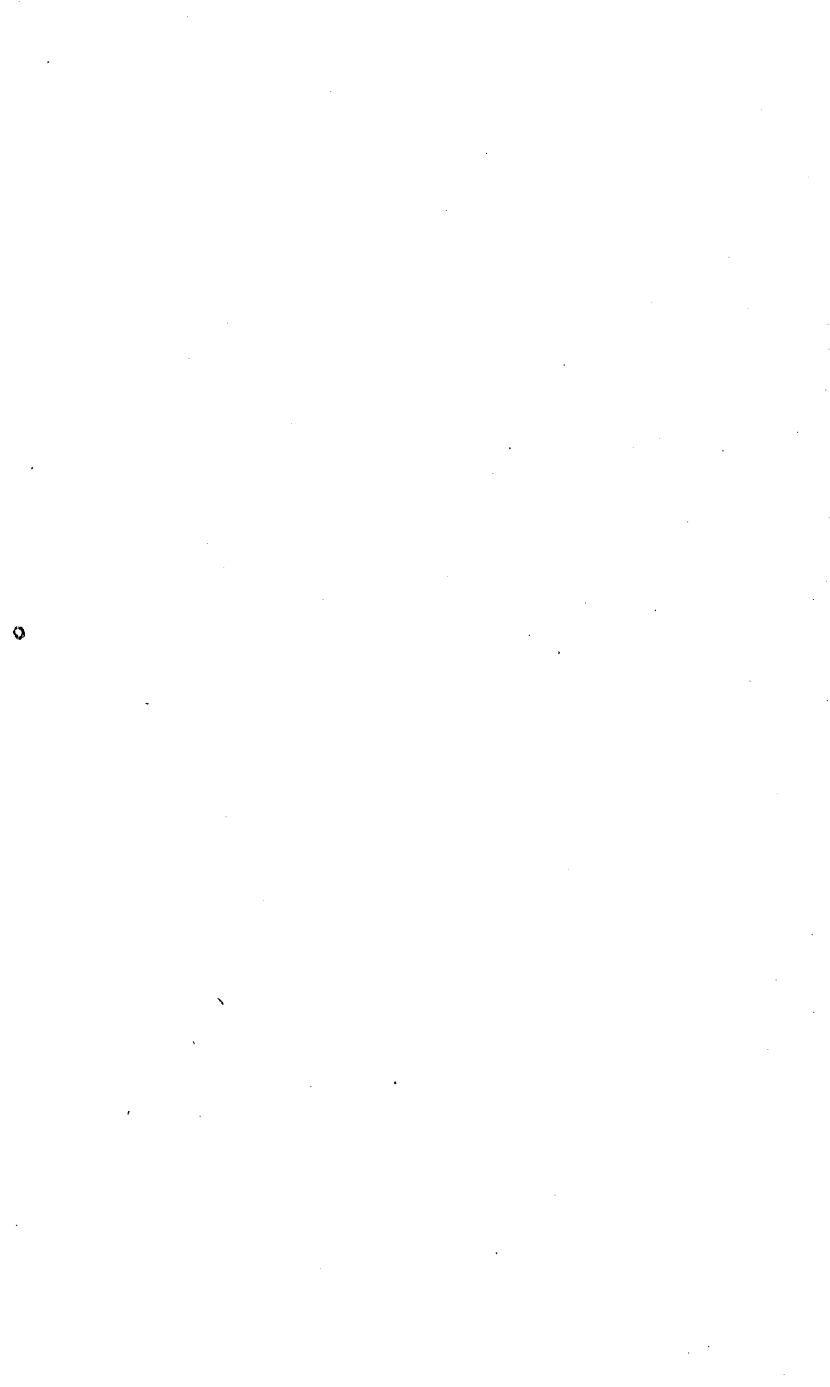
the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.⁸

⁸ Matthew 13:44-46.

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